

# THE Catholic Mind

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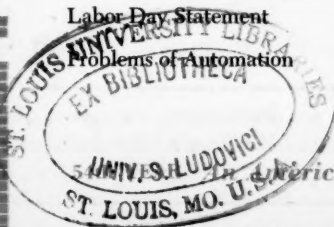
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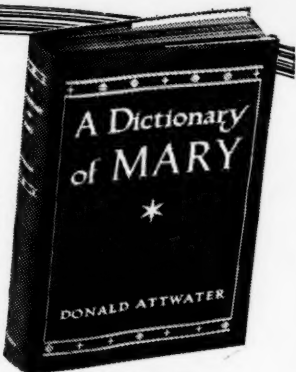
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# THE Catholic Mind

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## The Catholic Manifesto\*

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*Editor, The SIGN*

NEAR the middle of the nineteenth century, two men spent several years in Brussels, Belgium. There is no evidence that they ever met. One was Karl Marx and the other Bishop Pecci, Nuncio to Belgium, later Pope Leo XIII. Marx wrote the *Communist Manifesto* and *Das Kapital*, the sacred scriptures of the Communists. Leo XIII wrote *Rerum Novarum*, later elaborated and explained by Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Anno*. In May of this year we celebrated the sixty-fifth anniversary of the former encyclical and the twenty-fifth of the latter. Together these great documents constitute the Church's answer to the social question.

Both Marx and Pecci were widely traveled men. They saw at first hand the intolerable burden that weighted down the workingman. Under *laissez-faire* capitalism the worker was practically a slave. He was valued less than the machine at which he labored. He had little or no leisure for recreation, family, education, or religion. Even his wife and children were often forced to work long hours at back-breaking labor in mines and factories.

The reaction of the two men to what they saw was completely different. Marx was angry, bitter, cynical. He called for hatred—of man for man and class for class. He advocated violence and destruction. His theories were put into effect in the Russian Revolution of 1917 and today blight a sixth of the earth.

\*An editorial reprinted from the *Sign*, Monastery Place, Union City, N.J., May, 1956.

Leo and Pius advocated a program based on the Gospels. Instead of hatred, they called for love; instead of class warfare, class co-operation. They condemned the abuses of capitalism but rejected socialism. They defended the right of private property and free enterprise within just limits, but condemned excessive individualism as well as collectivism. They proclaimed in no uncertain terms the natural right of the worker to organize unions. They condemned statism but called on the state to protect and defend the weak and defenseless and to legislate for the social welfare of the citizen. Only a study of these great documents can give a notion of their tremendous scope and value.

### Teachings Met Opposition

We cannot deny that the two great Encyclicals have had good results. We must admit, however, that while the teachings of Marx inspired a fierce fervor in his followers that has led them almost to world conquest, the teachings of Leo and Pius have met a lukewarm reception or outright opposition, even among many Catholics.

The story is told that when *Rerum Novarum* was read from the pulpit of St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York, a man rose and stomped out, muttering to himself, "Socialism." That story is not exaggerated. Sixty-five years and another great Encyclical later, we often get exactly the same reaction from Catholics to Catholic social teaching. Some of our publications and some of our most widely accepted orators for Catholic and anti-Communist affairs are pre-*Rerum Novarum* in social thought.

In his encyclical *On Atheistic Communism*, published in 1937, six years after *Quadragesimo Anno*, Pope Pius XI complained:

The manner of acting in certain Catholic circles has done much to shake the faith of the working classes in the religion of Jesus Christ. These groups have refused to understand that Christian charity demands the recognition of certain rights due to the workingman, which the Church has explicitly acknowledged. What is to be thought of the action of those Catholic employers who in one place succeeded in preventing the reading of Our encyclical . . . in their local churches? Or of those Catholic industrialists who even to this day have shown themselves hostile to a labor movement that We ourselves recommended? Is it not deplorable that the right of private property defended by the Church should so often have been used as a weapon to defraud the workingman of his just salary and his social rights?

Too many Catholics have the idea that the acme of all virtue is to be anti-Communist, loudly so and on every occasion. To be anti-Communist is good and necessary. But it isn't all. It isn't enough to be anti-



anything. We must also be for something. We must have a positive program to replace the evil of Communism.

The popes have been offering it to us for years if we only had the faith and good sense to heed them.



## Authority of the Church

That principle which Leo XIII so clearly established must be laid down at the outset here, namely, that there resides in Us the right and duty to pronounce with supreme authority upon social and economic matters. Certainly the Church was not given the commission to guide men to an only fleeting and perishable happiness but to that which is eternal. Indeed "the Church holds that it is unlawful for her to mix without cause in these temporal concerns"; however, she can in no wise renounce the duty God has entrusted to her to interpose her authority, not, of course, in matters of technique for which she is neither suitably equipped nor endowed by office, but in all things that are connected with the moral law. For as to these, the deposit of truth that God committed to Us and the grave duty of disseminating and interpreting the whole moral law, and of urging it in season and out of season, bring under and subject to Our supreme jurisdiction not only social order but economic activities themselves.—*Quadragesimo Anno*.



## Ownership and Use

The right of property itself or its use, that is the exercise of ownership, is circumscribed by the necessities of social living. On the other hand, those who seek to restrict the individual character of ownership to such a degree that, in fact, they destroy it, are mistaken and in error.—*Quadragesimo Anno*.

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# The Message of Quadragesimo Anno Today\*

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WHEN Pope Pius XI wrote his encyclical on the fortieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, he eulogized his predecessor in the words of Isaias: "He shall set up a standard to the nations." Surely no less a tribute can be paid to the memorable encyclical which not only perfected the work of Leo XIII but went far beyond it in a broad, deep analysis of social problems and social order.

The 25 years since the publication of *Quadragesimo Anno* (hereafter, *Q. A.*) have produced enormous social, economic and political changes. It is no small tribute to the vitality and insight of this document that it is still consulted by Catholic and non-Catholic scholars as a guide to present situations. This interest is not confined to the enduring moral principles and judgments contained in *Q. A.* It also extends to judgments on contemporary history and to recommendations for lasting reform.

The encyclical was written against a background of economic tragedy. In 1931, worldwide economic depression reached its nadir in most

countries. Unemployment was rife. Many felt that the capitalist system was on the point of collapse. Thinkers everywhere sought a more viable method of producing needed goods and services. Articles and books proliferated on such subjects as economic planning, socialism, communism and fascism. In addition, many fads had their followers, and these were not always men of insignificant social stature. In the United States, we had technocracy, the money ideas of Father Coughlin and the growing appeal of Townsendism, to mention a few examples.

## Condemned Abuses

Against such a background of hysteria, the calm words of the Sovereign Pontiff were reassuring and providential. Yet he did not hesitate to denounce the abuses and evils which contributed to worldwide cataclysm. His excoriation of the unconscionable distribution of wealth and income in his day, and of the spirit of liberalism (in the European usage of the term) which produced and sanctioned it, was nothing less than violent—in the spirit of the

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\*Reprinted from *Social Order*, 3908 Westminster Blvd., St. Louis, Mo., January, 1956.

gentle Christ whipping the money-changers from the Temple. Likewise, he was relentless in characterizing the real nature of the economic dictatorship, financial malpractice and conscienceless greed which were debasing man in the very process that perfected and ennobled material goods.

Today American Catholic social scientists are occasionally embarrassed when a zealous reformer in our midst applies these denunciations to the "new American capitalism" of 1956. Two decades of social reform have changed the face of the United States in regard to abuses which were painfully evident here in 1931. While we still have social problems and some serious exploitation in certain areas, it is simply unhistorical to apply these passages to present-day America. Income distribution is tending toward equalization at constantly higher levels. Individualism has yielded to extensive state control. Powerful labor and farm organizations, in addition to government, have provided "countervailing forces" to the economic dictatorship of the Twenties.

But there are areas of the world to which the fulminations of Q.A. may still be applied literally. Cartelism and the restrictive mentality still flourish in some areas of Europe, leading to high prices, low production and great disparity in income distribution. Many parts of Latin America, Asia and Africa are underdeveloped, partly because native capital prefers the high and riskless returns of money capital to the con-

structive use of funds in promoting national development.

Some Socialist critics thought the Pontiff too harsh in refusing to let Catholics become Socialists, even though the beneficent changes in this system were acknowledged. But the hard anticlericalism and Marxism of certain contemporary Socialist unions and parties in Europe make this judgment still quite timely. As to Pius' brief but scathing reference to communism, the reader need only be referred to the later magisterial encyclical *On Atheistic Communism*. This document, written in 1937 when much of the world was engaged in various kinds of wishful thinking regarding the Kremlin and its policies, is still so timely that it could have been issued but yesterday. Those who do not believe in the divine guidance of the Church must at least consider this as one of the greatest political prophecies of recorded history.

These background references to Q.A. should serve to remind us that this document achieves timelessness as nearly as any message addressed to changeable humans. Yet it would be a mistake to treat the encyclical as if it were the Decalogue engraved in stone on Sinai. Like any papal pronouncement on social questions, it is a combination of eternal principles, based on natural law and divine revelation, and of application to contemporary situations. There is a mixture of stern and certain judgment on some points with somewhat hesitant prudential suggestions on others. As historical situ-

ations change, some judgments and prudential advice directed to these conditions are bound to be dated. What must amaze the objective historian who is not a believer is the high quality of these judgments as compared with other contemporary writings.

### Genius of Pius XI

Within the framework of authoritative Church writings, there is a definite genius attributable to Pius XI, as compared with the genius found in the writings of Leo XIII and Pius XII. Leo worked against the background of the nineteenth century, when problems seemed to be less complex. His remedies were fairly uncomplicated: defense of private property against socialism, the promotion of labor unions and social legislation to better the condition of workers.

By contrast, the present Holy Father faces social conditions which are so complex that the individual is in danger of being swallowed by the economic and political giants of our day. As a result, Pius XII is preoccupied with the need for decentralizing power. He favors wide diffusion of property ownership and the promotion of small business as means of keeping effective power close to individuals. He fears excessive nationalization, forced and centralized comanagement in industry and any monopolistic and bureaucratic trends that may have crept into the labor movement.

If, as a rough generalization, we may say that Leo XIII and Pius XII

were primarily concerned with the individual, Pius XI gave first emphasis to the social institutions that deeply affect man's progress. It is no accident that the word "organization" appears so frequently in Q.A. The term "institution" appears in the Latin text itself (*ac reformationem quidem institutionum*). Frequent references to "social justice" have caused much discussion among moralists about the precise meaning of this virtue. But there is wide agreement that this form of justice involves organization and the right ordering of the institutions of mankind, so that the common good will be promoted.

This strong emphasis upon institutions is of the essence of Q.A. While the elements of greed, avarice and lust for power are given due consideration, the main stress is not upon individuals as such, but rather upon the attitudes, customs, institutions and laws which affect men of good will and men of ill will alike. The pope sought to probe deeply into the basic elements of the existing social order, to pass moral judgment upon them and to suggest deep-rooted reforms so that socio-economic activities would be directed according to God's purpose in creating man and material goods. It is not enough to have men of good will; there must also be a framework of society which of its nature is in accord with God's law.

### Right of the Church

Following this analysis, most of the remainder of this paper will be

given over to a discussion of socio-economic institutions, as seen by Pius XI. Since the emphasis is upon the message of the pontiff *today*, this will not be a mere historical analysis. The treatment will be selective, with first consideration going to points which are of current importance.

Before treating specific institutions, however, some attention should be given to the underlying assumption of the whole encyclical, namely, that the Church has the right and duty to give moral pronouncements on socio-economic matters. Implicit in this assumption is the idea that there is a moral aspect to economic life, and that the Church can make sufficiently concrete judgments upon the subject to be useful to all mankind.

To the Holy Father, the idea of a moral aspect to economic matters derives immediately from the concept of divine purpose in the universe. Granted a teleological concept of the world, then no phase of human activity can be divorced from an ultimate reference to the Creator. This is not merely a matter of good will or proper intentions on the part of those involved in economic life; it is a question of the inner purpose of the things and institutions themselves. For example, material goods were created to serve man, not to dominate him. Economic life must minister to the dignity of the human person, the needs of the family, and the proper relationship of material, cultural and spiritual values.

Such a concept of the world would

not be strange to the student of St. Thomas Aquinas. It was magnificently portrayed by R. H. Tawney in his *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* and by Amintore Fanfani in his doctoral thesis, *Catholicism, Protestantism, and Capitalism*. In the framework of a divinely ordered universe, economic life may not be autonomous. While the *laissez-faire* liberalism that provoked this judgment may be dead in much of the world today, such a judgment still needs to be reaffirmed against a humanist materialism that distorts the proper perspective of material wealth. Order and purpose are central in the divine plan. Deviation from this order is bound to cause widespread derangements and social evils.

When moral and religious pronouncements are made on economic issues, it is important to distinguish between technical matters, which are not the concern of the Church, and those things which are connected with the moral law. This distinction, evident as it may seem, is not easily applied in practice. Prejudice, self-interest or confused thinking cause some unduly to narrow or enlarge the area of moral judgment on economic life. Those interested in preserving the *status quo* are predisposed to claim that many areas are purely technical and hence off-limits for the moralist. Those with a reforming bent sometimes press for objectives which are morally desirable but which may be impossible of achievement in the present state of economic society in a given country.

### Mixed Areas

Even were we to reach agreement in applying the distinction between purely technical and moral aspects of industrial society, there are still mixed areas which cause trouble to men of good will. Moral principles are not easily applied in economic life. Very often prudential judgments must be made which in turn call for precise knowledge of social situations, plus insight into techniques and methods of reform. In such areas, men of good will, who accept the same moral principles, may differ in making practical judgments. A good example of this is the moral aspect of "right-to-work" laws. The key point in this controversy is the practical judgment that such laws, in effect, hamper legitimate union organization.

In such mixed areas of practical judgment, it is necessary to move with extreme caution. It is an error, unfortunately too common, to clothe one's practical judgments with the same sanction and authority as the moral principles which one is applying. But it is equally pernicious, but not unusual, for moralists to write about issues of the day, blithely prescinding from the social research required to make an effective practical judgment in the field. Extreme approaches, for example, created headlines during 1955 Catholic controversies over right-to-work laws. Since the general public considers all clergymen as spokesmen for the Church, even though they do not have the teaching authority

of the popes and bishops, the authority of moral principles suffers in the eyes of this public when they are misapplied in practice, either through faulty economic analysis or the unwillingness to make the economic judgments necessary to apply such principles.

These points are quite important in the application of the principles of Q.A. to the problems of our day. Many men of good will and high intelligence are doing their utmost, in spite of some disagreements among themselves, to imbed these principles into current society. Their work suffers when bitter public controversies are provoked by the misguided extremists just referred to. Such differences offer to many the excuse, eagerly welcomed, for doing nothing about social reform on the grounds that there are no certain principles to follow.

### Acceptance of Principles

As to Catholic acceptance of the principles laid down in these social encyclicals, there should no longer be any possible question. Pius XI enunciated clearly the right and duty of the Church to make moral judgments on social and economic matters. His successor, in *Humani Generis*, made crystal clear the fact that express papal doctrinal teaching in encyclical letters is authoritative and binding upon the faithful. Of course, not everything in an encyclical is doctrinal. There are also appraisals of contemporary history, disciplinary rules, prudential judgments and suggestions which are not

meant to be commands. But when the pope is clearly teaching on faith and morals, even though he may not be speaking with the solemnity of an infallible definition, no Catholic is privileged to dissent.

There is no reason why these statements should cause non-believers to shy away from the social encyclicals, as if they were exclusively statements of Catholic dogma unacceptable to outsiders. On the contrary, the great bulk of moral teaching in these encyclicals is based either on natural law, or on general principles of the Christian tradition, equally accepted by Protestants and often embraced, in slightly different language, by non-Christians. Natural law, in particular, should be evident to any man who thinks deeply and without theological prejudice about the nature of man, society and the purpose of material things in relation to man.

Given the fact that the pope had both the right and the duty to judge the existing economic order from the viewpoint of moral and religious truth, it is interesting to note the current significance of his judgments. First we note that he rejected both in theory and in practice the philosophy of liberalism.

### Liberalism

*Laissez faire* was rejected in theory as embodying a false notion of man, of society, of the state and of economic life. Its view of man was false, because it subordinated the person to the impersonal play of economic forces, instead of making man

the center of economic life. It led to a false concept of society, inasmuch as it broke down the rich structure of intermediate social life, leaving only individuals and the state. The state in turn was considered only as a bystander, with little right to protect the common welfare or to intervene in economic affairs when the general good demanded it. Finally, liberalism considered economic life as a battleground for harsh, competitive strife, instead of a cooperative effort to meet man's needs through provident use of scarce resources.

The evil fruits of liberalism in practice reinforce the theoretical judgment made against it. Its early phases were characterized by ruthless competition, leading often to the survival of the least scrupulous. This in turn led to a second phase in which financial oligarchs created and apportioned empires of industry, and indeed loomed as superstates overriding the majesty of government itself. In the international area, some were economic imperialists in the interests of a perverted nationalism, others chose a form of internationalism that made money their sole gauge of patriotism.

It would not be difficult to exemplify this trend in terms of American economic history. The nineteenth century was the era of individualism, and the early twentieth that of empire building. When reaction set in under the New Deal, the strong power of the federal government was employed to curb the worst abuses of the titans of finance and

industry. The calming down period of the Eisenhower Administration has not changed the essentials of social control and regulation. In the meantime, as was noted earlier, countervailing forces of farm and labor groups have reinforced the government in its efforts to curb economic individualism. We may well be advancing toward a more ideal condition, under which needed social controls will not be largely administered by the state.

In the United States today, the situation is spotty. It is a safe generalization to say that big business and high finance give evidence of having accepted their social responsibilities in varying degrees. By contrast, smaller firms, and especially firms in newly industrialized areas of the South, still exhibit much of the spirit of individualism, even though their practice may be restrained by law. One of the paradoxes of our times is the tempering of judgment on the part of reform groups toward the economic giants that they denounced so lustily, and with justification, only two decades past. Yet the reforms that we can rejoice at here are by no means common throughout the world. In parts of Western Europe, and much of Asia, Africa and Latin America, economic liberalism still holds sway.

### Collectivism

After rejecting liberalism, the Pontiff found equal fault with collectivism, both in theory and in practice. He could not accept the theory of socialism, even though he con-

ceded beneficent modifications on the part of many socialists. It still exaggerated the role of economic life in human society. Even stronger, as would be expected, was his denunciation of communism. As we noted earlier, his 1937 analysis of this system is most pertinent today, especially in the light of the decade or more of fuzzy thinking on this subject by so many liberals of West and East alike.

In this connection we note that the trend toward collectivism was the object of profound papal concern immediately after World War II. Many Catholics, especially in France, Italy and Germany, felt that widespread nationalization was the only answer to pressing problems of reconstruction. Fortunately the broader wisdom of the papacy brought them to a more carefully reasoned point of view.

Although Pius XI almost totally rejected the prevailing economic philosophies of his day, he was careful not to condemn the capitalist system as such. On two separate occasions in the encyclical he states that the wage system, conjoined with private ownership of the means of production, is not of itself unjust. He stigmatizes abuses of the system, not the system itself. His successor has not always used the term in the same meaning. On a very few occasions the present Holy Father used the unqualified term "capitalism" as an object of condemnation. In these cases it is clear from context, and from the broader context of his other writings, that the apparent



conflict is merely one of semantics. The Church does not condemn private ownership of the means of production, nor does it reject the profit system or free enterprise rightly defined. It does condemn certain abuses in this area and a spirit which sometimes is characterized by Europeans as capitalism.

### Property

Coming to the specific institutions of economic life, the first treated by the Pontiff was that of private property. Here his reasoning is close and incisive. He repeats the traditional view that the right to private property springs from nature itself and hence from the Creator. In no other way, consonant with the dignity of man and other rights of individuals and family, can the goods of the earth be distributed properly and equitably. The defense of the right to private property, however, should not be interpreted as acquiescence in existing patterns of distribution of wealth and income. Both Pius XI and his successor insist strongly on the need for a wider and more equitable sharing of the goods of this world, productive property as well as consumer goods.

Nor is the property right vindicated here the absolute idea of ownership which was widely prevalent at the time. Property has a social as well as an individual aspect. The more that the use of property impinges upon society, as would be the case with a giant industrial corporation, the greater is the obligation of owners to consider the gen-

eral good as well as their own interests in the use of their property. Decisions on this matter are not left to the individual consciences of owners. Rather the state, as supreme custodian of the common good in such matters, has the right to determine what is permitted and what forbidden to owners in the use of their property. Regulations so laid down must truly reflect the demands of the common good, avoiding the twin extremes of individualism and collectivism. Even nationalization of property is permitted when private ownership involves such overweening power that the general welfare is endangered.

To appreciate the almost revolutionary sweep of this teaching, it is necessary to try to re-live the ideologies of the Twenties and early Thirties. As a refresher, one might disinter the writings of the Liberty League or even scan the political platforms of *both* major parties for 1932. It is hard to realize today that men widely accepted the notion of property without social responsibility.

Current controversies start at a much higher level, involving such issues as the impact of high taxation upon economic incentive, the need for maintaining adequate profits and the effect of guaranteed wages upon stable ownership of property. The perennial discussion of bigness in business, the merger movement, and unfair competition with smaller firms continues, but on a minor key. Apart from social situations and pockets of poverty, as

explained subsequently, few persons feel that the distribution of wealth and income in the United States is a burning issue. Such is hardly the case elsewhere in the world. In far too many countries, as the present Holy Father has repeatedly stated, the distribution of wealth and income is such as to leave a vast proletariat at the mercy of an impersonal economic system. Exploitation and proletarianism are not dead issues.

### Labor

Second among the institutions considered is labor. The discussion of labor in substantive parts of the encyclical largely deals with wages and the forces affecting workers' incomes. The treatment of labor organizations is mostly confined to the introductory section, wherein the pope notes approvingly the great growth of the union movement since 1891. It is not inaccurate to state that the pope took unions for granted, since organization is man's normal and natural way for achieving his rights in a complex industrial society. He did not feel it necessary to warn against any specific abuses, except to note that labor, like other economic groups, is bound to seek the common good as well as its particular interests. He cautioned that excessive raising or lowering of wages could cause unemployment.

There is some contrast between the prudential judgments of Leo XIII and Pius XI, on the one hand, and those of Pius XII, on the other, concerning labor unions. The differ-

ences do not involve the right to organize, which is a natural right, or the need for unions, which is self-evident in our intricate industrial society. But the present Holy Father has raised questions and issued warnings regarding certain trends in contemporary union movements. He is worried about excessive centralization of power in some unions, the abuse of the force acquired through organization and the intermingling of political issues foreign to the legitimate needs of unions. Apparently these warnings were provoked by conditions in Europe, although the principles invoked are universal in application.

While Americans may judge that these cautions were not directed at unions here, we should not feel that our labor movement enjoys a special immunity from human failings and imperfections. We may and should inquire whether our unions serve the common good in all respects. There may be room for discussion and honest differences of opinion, on such matters as the adequacy of measures for safeguarding union democracy, protecting the rights of members and preventing or eradicating racketeering. We may question the soundness of wage settlements should they exceed the limits of productivity gains and hence cause another round of inflation.

### Wages

Wage controversies in the United States today are generally carried on in a milieu different from that prevailing at the time of Q.A.

American workers do not question the justice of the wage-contract, in contrast to the views of the socialists whose theories the pope rejected. They are often indifferent to the idea of sharing in ownership, profits or management of industry, a proposal suggested by the Pontiff as a means of improving upon the wage contract. They are interested in a living wage, although their concept of conventional necessities makes this something more than the frugal and decent comfort envisioned by Leo XIII. By espousing American versions of Keynesianism, labor spokesmen rationalize wage increases as needed to maintain purchasing power.

In practice, organized labor does not push its theoretical views unduly. Unions have generally hesitated to raise wages to the point where firms fail and unemployment results. Where this has happened, it usually affects an inefficient firm unable to meet competition at going wages. Such situations were explicitly excluded by the pope, when he warned against excessive wages which would ruin a business and cause its workers to be idle.

The wage-theory of Pius XI may be summed up in these principles:

1. A wage system is morally just; but some introduction of the partnership idea would be desirable.
2. Both capital and labor have rights to a fair share of the product. In the past capital has taken the lion's share and left labor with a pittance.
3. Distribution of income should be

governed primarily by the demands of the common good.

4. The common good and man's dignity demand a living wage for workers. Economic changes to make such payment possible are demanded by social justice.

5. Prices as well as wages should be in "right proportion," so that the economy may prosper.

The theory just outlined is general in nature. It uses terms which are not self-defining, such as "fair," "right proportion" and "conducive to the common good." Thus it is accurate to say that the pope here outlines objectives, urging men of good will in various countries to discover the proper means, in terms of practical judgment, for achieving these ends. He feels that excessive profits, wages which are too high or too low and imbalance of prices between agriculture and manufacturing have caused economic dislocations. But he does not, in this section, offer specific means for correcting such evils. Undoubtedly he assumes that the general remedies offered elsewhere in the encyclical—social legislation, labor organization and vocational grouping of society—will meet these needs.

In the United States, both union organization and social legislation have profoundly affected income distribution and wage patterns. Whether or not the result has been satisfactory is a matter of debate. But few would question that conditions here have improved enormously since 1931. Yet, while undoubtedly progress has been made on the broad

scale, there are still islands of poverty in our midst. Poverty persists in certain age, racial and rural groups, as well as in regions characterized by declining industry. Broad macroeconomic techniques do not have much impact on these situations. Here is a challenge in a nation so generally rich as our own.

### Government

Next among the institutions to be considered is government. This topic has already been mentioned in connection with both liberalism and the right of property. The pope considered that the proper function of government had been badly perverted under the influence of liberalism. First, the theory of *laissez faire* caused the state to abdicate its function of protecting exploited groups and seeking the general welfare. The reaction to this extreme, and the fact that pluralism in society had broken down, then led the state to overburden itself with excessive powers. Government should be sovereign in a pluralistic society. It should have final decision on matters affecting the common good, but it should encourage diffusion of power in areas better handled by less comprehensive societies. Society exists to strengthen and help its constituent members. This is the famed principle of subsidiarity.

In this connection, the question of the proper role of the state has been seriously discussed in our nation for many years. Under the New Deal, we reacted against the *laissez-faire*

attitude previously in the ascendancy. World War II accentuated the trend toward centralization. Currently there is a reaction against excessive concentration of power in the federal government, in favor of more state-local activity. But much more can be done in the direction of pluralism, especially in encouraging effective activity by subsidiary groups.

### Economic Society

Certainly this appears to be one of the key ideas in the celebrated and much debated section, often called the heart of the encyclical, on vocational organization. In describing this type of economic society, the pope uses the term "*ordines*" in quotation marks. German and French translators use the terms *Berufstände* and *organisations professionnelles*. So far as can be determined, the reference is to a type of social structure not common under our legal system but well known in countries influenced by German law. It refers to an organization, private in nature, but possessing legally enforceable powers in governing the profession or group concerned. Such a group would be the exclusive representative of the occupation in question, affecting all persons in the occupation. The closest parallels generally known here would be the medieval guilds, our medical and bar associations and possibly a group such as the National Association of Security Dealers.

The main purposes of such a type

of social organization would be: 1) to build a framework which would facilitate the practice of social justice; 2) to restore pluralism into society, thus achieving a structural barrier against either individualism or statism and 3) to replace a class-struggle, overly competitive mentality with a cooperative approach to common problems. The pope considers this form of organization just as natural to man as the formation of cities or towns to meet man's social and political needs. By contrast, he considers atomistic individualism in industry and the class struggle between workers and management, as foreign growths harmfully introduced into the body economic. The pope is realistic enough to see the value of proper competition, and the inevitability of some clash of interest between capital and labor. But he rejects an economic order that emphasizes exclusively the divisive elements in the economy, to the detriment of cooperation and order.

Social order, rightly conceived, calls for organized cooperation within industries and occupations, as well as cooperation among these groups. Such cooperation would be directed toward the common good of the country. Undoubtedly these groups would have considerable powers of self-regulation, thus freeing government from the excessive detail burdening it today. They would not replace organizations, such as labor unions or employers' associations, dedicated to exclusive interests of a particular class. They

might absorb and expand such fledgling groups as exist today to promote common interests of an industry.

The reception given to this concept here has been mixed. On the one hand, many non-Catholic thinkers have either welcomed it or developed similar ideas independently. On the other hand, some have rejected it out of hand as implying fascism or regimentation. Many of these latter difficulties may have been caused in part by overeagerness on the part of American Catholic thinkers to work out a detailed blueprint for such a pluralistic society. This was further complicated by the introduction of economic or political preconceptions not contained in the encyclical.

Such misunderstandings were unfortunate, since the basic concept of the pope is of such evident value. Even though it was framed against a European background of "public law," and hence may have features not readily adapted into our legal system, its general outlines are of unquestioned merit. American commentators would have been better advised, it seems, to have given more weight to the warning given by the pope in paragraph 86 of *Q.A.*, that men are free to choose whatever form of organization they wish, provided that proper regard is had for the requirements of justice and of the common good.

Instead of presenting detailed blueprints, often foreign to our type of political and economic organization, we would have been wiser to

have singled out the main ideas of economic pluralism and to have explained how these could be adapted with minimum changes in our basic economic system. Progress is more often evolutionary than revolutionary. If we can make progress in: 1) joint organization of labor and management to meet common problems; 2) transfer of many government regulatory functions to these groups, with safeguards for the common good; and 3) emphasis on cooperation rather than class struggle, then we could go far toward the ideal social order. By emphasizing, publicizing and encouraging developments in this direction, we could make substantial progress. What the final result will be, in detail, we do not know, nor do we have any right to pretend to know.

### The Proper Motivation

Such an institutional framework will help in meeting the demands of social justice. It will go far toward establishing a juridical and social order which will foster the sound development of economic life. But this structure cannot function if men are not motivated by the right spirit. Since it calls for cooperation, it could be wrecked if greed and unbridled ambition were dominant in the economy. Higher directing principles must be sought, namely, social justice and social charity. Social justice calls for the proper organization of society so that the common good will be promoted. Charity, the love of one's neighbor, is a uniting and cementing factor, completing

the work of justice. Those motivated by justice alone may ask: What *must* I do to fulfill my duty? Those inspired by charity ask: What *can* I do to help my fellow man?

By juxtaposing moral and economic reform, the pope avoids the twin rocks that shipwreck many schemes for bettering society. He realizes that good will is not enough; even the actions of good persons need coordination. Since universal good will is not attainable in this world, a proper social order must constrain the evil and the indifferent. On the other hand, the most ideal social structure will not work without a high degree of cooperation from persons participating in it. The alternative to cooperation is constraint, and if police powers must be used against the majority, a society is either tyrannical or hopelessly decayed.

The appeal to idealism may seem to be wasted in the hard world of business. Yet Americans have often shown high idealism. Witness our participation in two world wars and our aid to devastated nations after these conflicts. Furthermore, social attitudes are not immutable. It is the task of Catholic Action to seek to influence men and to persuade them to follow sound principles. In this work, men of good will in each occupation will be apostles to their fellows. Such methods produced abundant fruit in the forty years intervening between the two great social encyclicals.

Students of Catholic social action might well restudy the introductory

sections of Q.A., as indications of the rich variety of activities approved by the pope. There are here no counsels of inaction; no carping negativism directed at the petty faults of reformers; and none of the paralyzing fears that hinder good

works on the grounds that somewhere, sometime, something may go wrong. The pope calls for unity, tolerance, harmony among Catholic social apostles. It is to be hoped that this urgent plea will not go unheeded here.



### State Ownership

Certain kinds of property, it is rightly contended, ought to be reserved to the State since they carry with them a dominating power so great that they cannot, without danger to the general welfare, be entrusted to private individuals. Such demands and desires have nothing in them now which is inconsistent with Christian truth, and much less are they special to socialism. Those who work solely toward such ends have, therefore, no reason to become Socialists.—*Quadragesimo Anno*.



### Condition of the Workers

Certainly the condition of the workers has been improved and made more equitable, especially in the more civilized and wealthy countries where the workers can no longer be considered universally overwhelmed with misery and lacking the necessities of life. But, since manufacturing and industry have so rapidly pervaded and occupied countless regions, not only in the countries called new, but also in the realms of the Far East that have been civilized from antiquity, the number of the non-owning working poor has increased enormously and their groans cry to God from the earth. Added to them is the huge army of rural wage workers, pushed to the lowest level of existence and deprived of all hope of ever acquiring "some property in land," and, therefore, permanently bound to the status of non-owning worker unless suitable and effective remedies are applied.—*Quadragesimo Anno*.

# How Binding Are the Encyclicals?\*

NORMAN GALLOWAY, O.S.A.

SEVERAL months ago, I met a young labor organizer from the Philippine Islands. During the course of our conversation, he told me that in a recent drive to organize the highly underpaid Philippine sugar workers he was arrested and thrown into jail. Luckily for him, he didn't go to jail empty-handed. He had a copy of the *Five Great Encyclicals* in his back pocket. While in jail, he read and re-read the social encyclicals—*On the Condition of Labor* (*Rerum Novarum*) and *The Reconstruction of the Social Order* (*Quadragesimo Anno*). From them he developed a deep love for and knowledge of the social teachings of the Church. Better still, he developed a sense of devotion or an apostolate to teach and spread these papal social teachings.

Certainly, it would be a severe measure to send the masses of the Catholic laity to prison in order to have them read the social encyclicals! But the shame of the matter would be that even such a drastic measure as this would be fruitless, since few, if any, of the laity would have a copy of the encyclicals on their person.

With the growth of the factory system and mass production in Europe at the end of the 19th century, many social evils arose: long hours of labor, low wages, slum housing, poor sanitation, women and children working, etc. The industrial world was arraying itself into two lines of battle—capital versus labor. At this time, on May 15, 1891, Pope Leo XIII issued his masterful social encyclical, *On the Condition of Labor*. In this he proposed remedies for the social problems of the day and outlined the rights and duties of management and labor.

However, partly because these teachings of Leo XIII were misunderstood, ignored or rejected by most Catholics for the next 40 years, Pope Pius XI deemed it necessary to issue another social encyclical. Consequently, on May 15, 1931, he issued his labor encyclical, *The Reconstruction of the Social Order*. In this document he clarified some doubts and problems which had arisen since 1891 and then adapted and applied the principles of Leo XIII to more recent social ills.

Twenty-five years have passed

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since this memorable event and now as we celebrate the silver jubilee of the publication of *The Reconstruction of the Social Order* on May 15, 1956, two questions come to mind: First, have Catholics made much effort to acquaint themselves with Papal social teaching? Second, do they have any obligation in conscience in regard to the social encyclicals?

Unfortunately, if we consult the experts, authorities in the field of Catholic social action, we would receive a negative answer to our first question. Too many Catholics are still woefully ignorant of papal social teaching. For example, a few years ago a priest long active in the Catholic labor school movement remarked that probably not more than one Catholic in 100 knows anything of the social encyclicals. In other words, the laity have kept themselves as pure from any taint of papal social teaching as the purity of a bar of Ivory soap. Archbishop Lucey of San Antonio, Texas, recently expressed the same sentiment. "Unfortunately, some of our people have not yet caught up in their social thinking with Pope Leo XIII. Just when they will catch up with Pope Pius XI is a question."

Now, let us consider our second question: Do Catholics have any moral obligation in conscience toward the social encyclicals? Or, what is the binding force of the social encyclicals? To answer these questions adequately we must consider the following points: What is the general nature of the encyclical

als? Are they binding in conscience? How do they bind? What is binding in them? Where do they bind? And finally, whom do they bind?

### Force of the Encyclicals

We may divide the statements of the Popes, acting as pastors and teachers for the universal Church into two general classes: extraordinary and ordinary statements. The extraordinary class would include all *ex cathedra* statements. In these, the Pope uses the fullness of his power and addresses the entire Church in matters directly related to faith and morals. Whenever he issues statements of this nature, he is always infallible. For example, the proclamation of the Dogma of the Assumption of Our Blessed Mother by Pope Pius XII.

The other class refers to those ordinary statements in which the Pope does not use the fullness of his power. In these statements the Holy Father may or may not address himself to the entire world, and the material dealt with need not necessarily refer directly to faith and morals. In this second category we would find the social encyclicals. The welfare of the faithful demands that the Supreme Pontiff exercise his teaching power frequently even when it is not opportune to use the fullness of his power. Thus we may say that the encyclicals are the most common and frequent means used in teaching employed by the Roman Pontiff.

However, let us not delude ourselves into thinking that we can accept or reject these encyclicals at

will because the Pope does not use the fullness of his power. Our present Holy Father in discussing some of the false opinions of our day in his encyclical *Humani Generis* of 1950 utters some very relevant words on this point. "Nor must it be thought that what is expounded in encyclical letters does not of itself demand consent, since in writing such letters the Popes do not exercise the supreme power of their Teaching Authority."

The social encyclicals are binding in conscience basically because our present Holy Father and the two Popes who wrote these documents say so. Consider, for example, the beautiful, almost poetic, pleas of Pope Pius XII on this matter in his Pentecostal message of June 1941:

Do not let die in your midst and fade away the insistent call of the *social encyclicals*, that voice which indicated to the faithful in the supernatural regeneration of mankind the *moral obligation* to cooperate in the arrangement of society, and especially of economic life, exhorting those who share in this life to action no less than the State itself. Is not this a *sacred duty* for every Christian?

If we desire to know the meaning and force of the documents which someone has written, the most logical thing to do is consult the one who did the writing. Therefore, to determine the binding force of *The Condition of Labor* we turn to the author, the Pope most famous for his encyclicals, Leo XIII. Even as early as 1895, in his encyclical *Longinqua Oceani*, addressed to the

United States, he stated: "The encyclical letters which We have already written during Our pontificate [these would include *On the Condition of Labor*] contain a number of teachings which Catholics *must follow* and which they *must obey*." From the force of these words, Leo XIII is definitely implying a serious obligation.

Pius XI stated in his encyclical *The Reconstruction of the Social Order* that both he and Leo XIII had a grave obligation to issue the social encyclicals. Now, if they had a serious obligation to issue these documents, it must follow that we have a serious obligation to put them into practice.

### Binding Under Sin

How are the social encyclicals binding? In answer to this question we may say that the social encyclicals are binding, in general, under grave sin.

More specifically and positively, we are obligated to follow the teachings of the encyclicals by reason of the virtues of obedience and faith. By obedience, because the teaching authority of the Supreme Pontiff is so holy and sacred that when he issues a decision even on social-moral issues we ought to accept and follow it. We are bound to respect and obey it. The sacred teaching authority of the Church should be our motive for obeying. Because even when the Pope does not exercise his authority to the fullest degree, he always has the special assistance of the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of Truth—

Who will remain with the Church forever.

Again, we ought to accept these social encyclicals by reason of the virtue of faith. This virtue is indirectly related to social-moral teachings because the encyclicals are the applications of the Gospel to modern society. Therefore, we have a two-fold positive obligation: to believe what the encyclicals teach and obey what they command.

Negatively, if a Catholic were to deliberately deride or belittle these documents; regard them with contempt or little esteem, then such an individual, according to Pope Pius XI, would be guilty of blasphemy, injustice and ingratitude. Or, as Bishop Mulloy of Covington, Kentucky has so aptly stated: "It is due time that Catholics come to realize that they cannot excuse themselves from grave sin if they deliberately disregard or deride the contents of the social papal encyclicals . . ."

### Precept and Counsel

Just as we would hesitate to disregard the unanimous advice of a group of medical specialists on a certain diagnosis; so too, should we hesitate to disregard the advice of the social encyclicals because they are also the result of expert opinion based upon investigation. The Popes before issuing these statements sought the advice of the most expert counsellors available. The possibility of error in these documents is so utterly remote that it is practically nonexistent, even as a possibility.

We may well ask ourselves the question: Are we bound to follow out every direction or bit of advice given to us in the social encyclicals? The answer to this question is two-fold. What is binding depends upon the force of the words and the conditions of the place. First, let us consider the force of the words.

When our Holy Father uses the words "every effort" or the word "must" and these are used very frequently—or words of a similar nature, we may feel certain that he is imposing a grave obligation. A typical example of this occurs in the encyclical *The Reconstruction of the Social Order* in which Pius XI refers to a family living wage: "Every effort must, therefore, be made that fathers of families receive a wage sufficient to meet adequately ordinary domestic needs."

Although the Supreme Pontiff imposes grave obligations upon us in many instances, nevertheless, in many other cases he merely gives counsel or advice. An instance of this is the case in which Pius XI advocates (not commands) labor's participation in ownership, management and profits: "In the present state of society We deem it *advisable* that the wage contract should, when possible, be modified somewhat by a contract of partnership . . ." Even though the Pope is not placing a grave obligation on us in this matter, we should regard this advice with a great deal of respect, since he has consulted the opinions of experts in this matter.

A second way in which we can

determine the nature of our encyclical obligations is based on the social conditions of the place in which we live. According to the principles of justice and charity, the closer we are to any given problem the greater is our obligation to remedy that problem. For example, a worker has a greater obligation to strive for better working conditions in his own plant, better housing in his own town and better labor relations with his own immediate fellow-employees and employer than he does toward working conditions in some other plant, housing in some other town or the labor relations between some other employees and employer.

We must not think, however, that our obligations end once our own immediate needs are fulfilled. We are our brother's keeper. We should be interested in the plight of the Negro, the substandard wages of the Mexican "wetbacks," the horrible living conditions of our migratory workers, and the exploitation of the Puerto Ricans coming to our shores. In addition, we should also be concerned about the vacillating Governmental policy toward our 430,000 American Indians and the abominable living, education and housing conditions which they must endure.

Nor should we close our eyes to the slammed- and bolted-door immigration policy of the United States, by saying that the plight of the over-crowded countries of Europe and Asia is no concern of ours. God created the world and its resources for the good of *all* men.

Some say that the social encycli-

cals do not apply to the United States. However, this position is untenable in the light of the following points:

First, the encyclical on *The Condition of Labor* is addressed to the bishops throughout the *entire world* and the encyclical on *The Reconstruction of the Social Order* is addressed to *all the faithful* throughout the world. When Pius XI speaks about the evils of capitalism in his social encyclical, he certainly didn't intend to exclude the United States, the most powerful capitalistic nation in the world. Otherwise, he would have expressly stated so. Third, our present Holy Father in his encyclical *Sertum Laetitiae*, which is addressed to the hierarchy of the United States, definitely implies that the social encyclicals apply to our country. Consequently, we must conclude that the social encyclicals most certainly apply to the United States. Nevertheless, it could be said that they might apply more to some other countries than to our own nation.

There are many papal statements which indicate most clearly that the social encyclicals impose moral obligations on everyone: bishops, priests and Catholic laity. No one is excused from them. The nature of your obligation depends upon the nature of your work. A housewife would have fewer obligations to papal social teaching than a factory worker; a manager's secretary, fewer obligations than the manager; a union member, fewer obligations than a union leader; a voter, fewer obligations than a politician; a

student, fewer obligations than a teacher.

Since the social encyclicals impose moral obligations on all Catholics, the very least we can do is to read them, if not study them. Now is the time for action. Rest comes in eternity. Therefore, after reading and study there should be action. But before we act, we must see or observe where our action is necessary. Then, we must judge what action should be taken, in the light of papal social teaching and finally, we must act, in so far as we are able.

A few years ago our present Holy Father made this statement: "No one can accuse the Church of having disregarded the workers or social problems." How about you? Can the finger of guilt be pointed at you? What do you know about social conditions in your locality: working conditions, wages, labor unions, housing, delinquency and crime, treatment of racial minorities, conditions of poverty, health problems, marriage and family problems, etc.? The remedies for these problems are to be found, in large measure, in the social encyclicals.

Cardinal Saliege of France said a few years ago: "A strong Christian is not part of a system. He is a revolutionary in the good sense of the word. He revolts against all injustices but especially against those which do not affect him." Most fittingly do these words apply to Christ, who was a revolutionary and preached revolution. The greatest of all revolutions in history was the

triumph of Christianity over the paganism of the Roman empire.

### Call to Revolution

The entire history of the Church has been a history of revolution. She triumphed over the slavery of the barbarians, over serfdom and the lawlessness of an outworn feudalism. More recently, after Pope Leo XIII published his encyclical, *On the Condition of Labor*, he was called a revolutionary by newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic. In 1931 when Pope Pius XI issued his famous labor encyclical: *The Reconstruction of the Social Order*, he was also called a revolutionary.

Consequently, as we commemorate the silver jubilee of this revolutionary encyclical, this question comes to mind. Are you a revolutionary? You should be. We are in the middle of revolution. Western civilization and culture are crumbling by reason of it. Catholics could revolutionize America by living the social teachings of the Church in their own lives. With Tertullian, an early Christian writer speaking of the impact of the early Church on pagan Rome, we could say: "We are but of yesterday, yet we fill your cities, islands, forts, towns, councils, even camps, tribes, the palace, the senate, the forum; we have left you the temples alone."

The Communists live the social teachings of Karl Marx contained in the *Communist Manifesto* and *Das Kapital*. We should live the social teachings of Pope Leo XIII and

Pope Pius XI contained in the social encyclicals. Lenin once told a group of students before the Communist Revolution in Russia that he might not see the revolution in his day. In three months, he was lead-

ing it! If we had the same devotion to the social encyclicals as Lenin had to communism, we could lead a Christian revolution to Christianize the social and economic life of the world.



### Function of the State

With regard to civil authority, Leo XIII, boldly breaking through the confines imposed by Liberalism, fearlessly taught that government must not be thought a mere guardian of law and of good order, but rather must put forth every effort so that "through the entire scheme of laws and institutions . . . both public and individual well-being may develop spontaneously out of the very structure and administration of the State." Just freedom of action must, of course, be left both to individual citizens and to families, yet only on the condition that the common good be preserved and wrong to any individual be abolished.—*Quadragesimo Anno*.



### The State and Taxation

When the State brings private ownership into harmony with the needs of the common good, it does not commit a hostile act against private owners but rather does them a friendly service; for it thereby effectively prevents the private possession of goods, which the Author of nature, in His most wise providence, ordained for the support of human life, from causing intolerable evils and rushing to its own destruction; it does not destroy private possessions but safeguards them; and it does not weaken private property rights, but strengthens them.—*Quadragesimo Anno*.

# Toward a New Society\*

RT. REV. MSGR. GEORGE G. HIGGINS

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MAY 15 was a great day for the Church. The occasion was the sixty-fifth anniversary of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (English title: *On the Condition of Labor*) and the twenty-fifth anniversary of Pope Pius XI's *Quadragesimo Anno* (*On Reconstructing the Social Order*). Both of these great Pontiffs had chosen the same day—forty years apart—on which to give us timeless social principles to guide us in our life in society.

The very fact that the anniversary of these two great social encyclicals was publicly commemorated in the United States by fifteen or twenty diocesan social action committees and by an even larger number of colleges, universities and local Catholic organizations is evidence that the two encyclicals have had a considerable influence in our nation at least to the extent of making people aware of the moral aspects of economic life and conscious of their moral responsibilities as individuals and as members of economic groups.

Back in 1891, and even as recently as 1931, relatively few Americans, Catholics included, were thinking in terms of the morality or immorality of economic systems and

practices. Fewer still, perhaps, were prepared to admit that the economic order, in all things connected with the moral law, comes within the jurisdiction of the Church. Economic Liberalism or individualism, which demands that there be no moral or social controls over economic life—and which was so roundly condemned by both Leo XIII and Pius XI—was the dominant philosophy of American economic life.

Considerable progress has been made, however, since 1931. Economic Liberalism, at least in certain mitigated forms, still exercises a certain amount of influence in the United States, but more and more Americans in these latter days find themselves agreeing with Pope Pius XI when he says that “even though economic and moral science employs each its own principles in its own sphere, it is, nevertheless, an error to say that the economic and moral orders are so distinct from and alien to each other that the former depends in no way on the latter.”

This is progress, symbolized by the widespread observance of the anniversary of the two encyclicals and by the ever-growing number of social education programs being

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sponsored by Catholic organizations and schools.

### Progress Made

But how much progress have we made in the practical application of the moral directives of the two encyclicals?

To answer this question, we have to distinguish between the "reform" of economic life and the long-range "reconstruction" of the economic order. Many specific measures of "reform" are advocated by the two encyclicals, but the English word "reform," as the late Monsignor John A. Ryan suggested shortly after Pius XI's encyclical was issued, "is too weak to characterize adequately the Holy Father's proposals for the remaking of industrial society. The term 'reconstruction,' in other words, rebuilding, is the only adequate expression. What the Pope demands is a new kind of society, a new social order, an industrial organization which will differ radically from the economic arrangements which have existed for the last 150 years."

We have made a great deal of progress in carrying out the specific "reforms" of the encyclicals, but considerably less in promoting this long-range "reconstruction."

The principal measures of "reform" advocated by Leo XIII and Pius XI are *legislation* and *organization*. Progress has been made in both fields, although certain gaps remain to be filled.

Since 1891, and more particularly since 1931, the Federal Government, reversing a very bad tradition of

*laissez faire*, or "hands off," has gradually come to merit the praise that Pius XI bestows upon those nations in which "a new branch of law, wholly unknown to the earlier time, has arisen from the continuous and unwearied labor to protect vigorously the sacred rights of the workers that flow from their dignity as men and as Christians." These new types of law, the Holy Father continues, "undertake the protection of life, health, strength, family, homes, workshops, wages and labor hazards, in fine, everything which pertains to the condition of wage workers, with special concern for women and children."

In all of these fields and in others left unspecified in this particular passage of the encyclical, the Federal Government, however belatedly and experimentally, has enacted legislation more or less in harmony with the teaching of Leo and Pius.

### The Bishops' Program

In 1919, long before the Federal Government had seriously begun to "protect . . . the sacred rights of the workers," the American Bishops recommended eleven major types of governmental action which in their own opinion were badly needed at the time. This "Bishops' Program of Social Reconstruction" was more or less ignored during the twenties, but happily the preface to the twentieth anniversary edition of the "Program" was able to report that by 1939, of eleven proposals, all but one had been either wholly or partially trans-



lated into fact. And additional progress has been made since then.

There are still some serious gaps in federal legislation and even more serious deficiencies in the social legislation of the individual states, some of which have been scandalously recreant in their duty to "protect the sacred rights of the workers." In general, however, we may conclude that considerable progress has been made since, and to a certain extent because of the influence of the two great social encyclicals.

Both Leo XIII and Pius XI vigorously defended the right of labor to organize into unions of their own choosing and wholeheartedly gave their approval to unionism as a necessary measure of reform in modern economic life. Leo's endorsement of unionism was notoriously disregarded in the United States, even by certain influential Catholics, so much so that by the time of Pius XI's encyclical, forty years later, only two or three million American workers were members of bona fide unions. But if you lived through the Great Depression, you know that considerable progress has been made since 1931. Labor's natural right to organize was given more or less effective legal protection—for the first time—in 1935 with the passage of the National Labor Relations Act. Today, in spite of the many retrogressive features of the Taft-Hartley Act and in spite of even more reprehensible laws in certain states, approximately fifteen million workers are organized. Progress, yes. But the organization of agricultural and so-

called white collar workers must be carried forward as rapidly as possible.

These two types of "reform"—legislation and organization, including of course the organization of farmers, employers and professional people—are aimed at implementing what might be called the central principle of the two encyclicals, namely, that ownership and work are both individual and social in character and therefore must be made to serve the interests not only of individuals but of society as well. Legislation and organization have done much to bring about this necessary balance between the individual and social aspects of economic life, but they are not the final answer. They are, or should be, merely steps in the right direction.

What is needed, if we are to avoid the dictatorship of wealth on the one hand or the dictatorship of government on the other, is an overall reconstruction of the social order along the lines of the so-called Industry Council system. It is "most necessary," as Pius XI tells us, that there be established a "juridical and social order which will, as it were, give form and shape to all economic life" an order "which public authority ought to be ever ready effectively to protect and defend."

### **Twin Dangers**

Protective and "reform" legislation is necessary; so is organization. But legislation, if relied upon too heavily, can innocently lead us into statism; and organization alone—along class

lines—can easily result in an all-out struggle for domination between or among contending economic power groups.

Our task for the future, while continuing to fill in the gaps in federal and state legislation, and while continuing to organize the unorganized, is to encourage existing organizations of labor, management, agriculture and the professions to cooperate as much as possible—under government supervision, but free from government domination—in a federated system of industrial and professional councils specifically designed to facilitate the practice of social justice by consciously promoting the general welfare or the common good. And even as we are working toward the establishment of such a system, it is most necessary that there be the fullest possible cooperation between government and private organizations. Otherwise we may become totalitarian ourselves in opposing totalitarianism in other parts of the world.

A gradual but steady growth into a system of agencies of cooperation for the common good must be accompanied by serious efforts to extend the ownership of productive property as widely as possible not only in farming but in city industry. The widespread ownership of property is basic to a sound economy and a good social order. This period of change, of transition from the present system into something better, can be used to induce ownership by employees of the companies

in which they work. Profit-sharing in which the people working in the company participate in ownership seems a reasonable method of distributing productive property. Since small stockholders are individually helpless, it may be mutually advantageous for an employees' stockholders' association to represent the rank-and-file of the worker-owners. This is an unusual proposal, but we ask the unions and all interested parties to give it thoughtful consideration.

### Industry Council Plan

This program of social reconstruction which is outlined in Pope Pius XI's encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno*, is commonly referred to in the United States today as the Industry Council Plan. Many people—including some of us who use it most frequently—are not at all satisfied with the name. The name, however, is relatively unimportant; the all-important thing is the program itself.

The encyclical program—call it what you will—is based upon the principle that an organized *economic* society is as natural and as necessary as an organized *political* society. In the absence of a properly organized political society we have either anarchy or dictatorship. By the same token, in the absence of a properly organized economic society we have either uncontrolled competition (which is economic anarchy) on the one hand, or economic dictatorship (concentration of ownership and economic control) on the other.

And, as Pius XI reminds us, the former inevitably and "of its own nature" produces the latter.

But what is a properly organized economic society? It is one in which "men have their place, not according to the position each has in the labor market but according to the respective social functions which each performs."

This means that all of the people engaged in a given industry or profession (workers and employers alike) are intended by nature (and not simply because the Popes have said so) to cooperate with one another for the good of their own industry or profession and for the good of the whole economy. Nature itself intends them to organize for this purpose—to "form guilds or associations" and through these "self-governing associations" to regulate economic life according to the requirements of social justice. Each industry forms a separate "order" (or "guild" or "occupational group" or "industry council") and the various industries, thus organized, are to work together for the common good. Together they form the Social Order whose function it is, in cooperation with the government, to "give form and shape to all economic life."

These "orders" are not the creatures of government. They are natural organizations and, to the greatest possible extent, they are to be self-governing—subject, however, to the over-all supervision of the State, which has the final responsibility for coordinating the activi-

ties of all subordinate groups in the interest of the common good.

It is very important to emphasize that this organized system of cooperation among the various self-governing "orders" is not a distinctively Catholic program, but rather one which is based upon the natural law—upon the nature of man and the nature of society—and therefore one which ought to recommend itself to all right-thinking Americans, whatever their religion. It is encouraging to note that the program is recommending itself to an ever increasing number of Americans, irrespective of their religious beliefs.

There have been a dozen or more non-Catholic authors, who, within the last two or three years, have independently advocated a program of social reconstruction similar in its essential details to the industry council program advocated by the encyclicals.

### A Look at the Record

But you may say: "Well and good. But that's all very theoretical. What I want to know is whether or not there is any progress being made in practice as opposed to theory." Well, let's take a look at part of the record.

The U. S. Department of Commerce recently published an enormous directory, *National Associations of the United States*, giving detailed information on approximately 4,000 trade, professional, civic, labor, religious and other organizations, the majority of which are national in scope. Indispensable as a convenient reference book for

busy executives, it also serves a very useful purpose for economists and sociologists, and, in general, for all those who are interested in the reconstruction of the social order along the lines of the Industry Council Plan.

One of the more common objections to the Industry Council program used by some persons can be summarized as follows: The Industry Council program presupposes that employers and workers are already highly organized into their own voluntary associations. But, while workers are partially organized at the present time, employers are unorganized and wish to remain unorganized. Therefore the Industry Council program, however desirable in theory, is impractical as far as the United States is concerned, at least for the foreseeable future.

This objection fails to take into account the information contained in the new directory of the Department of Commerce. Actually American businessmen are very highly organized, much more so, as a matter of fact, than the workers are. Economists have known this for a long time, but even they will probably be surprised at the sheer quantity of statistical evidence provided in the new directory.

Fifteen hundred national trade associations and an additional 300 associations made up predominantly of businessmen are listed. We are told that the 1,500 trade associations have a paid staff of 16,000 persons and a gross membership of over 1,000,000 business firms. Including

locals and branches, it is estimated by the editors of the directory that there are 12,000 trade associations and 4,000 Chambers of Commerce, to say nothing of 15,000 civic service groups, luncheon clubs and similar organizations of business and professional men and women.

These figures are extremely encouraging. They indicate that Americans are really not as individualistic as they sometimes pretend to be. Most important of all, they indicate that the groundwork for the Industry Council Plan is already fairly well established. Neither labor nor management is completely organized, of course, but both are certainly well enough organized to warrant our giving thought to the establishment of the Industry Council program.

The organization of the unorganized, particularly of unorganized workers, ought to continue to have a high priority on the agenda of social reconstruction. At the same time, however, we can be reasonably optimistic about the progress already made in this direction. Also, we can begin to concentrate on the all-important problem of persuading our existing organizations of labor and management to cooperate with one another on behalf of the common good instead of being preoccupied almost exclusively with their separate and more selfish interests.

If you read the Catholic press regularly, you will remember that the Bishops of the United States called attention to this problem in

1948 in their annual statement, *The Christian in Action*. They clearly recognized that economic individualism, which is so often said to be characteristic of the United States, is more of a myth than a fact. American economic individualism, they implied, has been transformed into "group individualism"—if we may use a rather contradictory phrase.

"Today we have labor partly organized," the Bishops said, "but chiefly for its own interests. We have capital or management organized, possibly on a larger scale, but again for its own interests. What we urgently need, in the Christian view of the social order, is the free organization of capital and labor in permanent agencies of cooperation for the common good."

The new directory of the Department of Commerce, as we have already indicated, generously supports the Bishops' conclusion that our national economy is already very highly organized.

The evidence is overwhelming—634 pages of names and addresses of national organizations, including

1,500 national trade associations and 200 national unions. Ten years from now, perhaps, the Department of Commerce will be able to publish another directory indicating that some of these trade associations and some of these unions, while preserving their own autonomy and their separate identity, have come together in "permanent agencies of cooperation for the common good." Let us hope so. Let us hope and pray that more and more of our trade associations and unions will take to heart the words of Pope Pius XI in his encyclical, *On Reconstructing the Social Order*: "And may these free organizations [trade associations and unions among others], now flourishing and rejoicing in their salutary fruits, set themselves the task of preparing the way, in conformity with the mind of Christian social teaching, for those larger and more important guilds, Industries and Professions [Industry Councils], which we mentioned before, and make every possible effort to bring them to realization."



## Sound Social Economy

Then only will the social economy be rightly established and attain its purposes when all and each are supplied with all the goods that the wealth and resources of nature, technical achievement, and the social organization of economic life can furnish.—*Quadragesimo Anno*.

# The Popes and the American Worker\*

JOHN C. CORT  
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**B**ACK about 1947 the French Communist newspaper, *L'Humanité*, sent one of its writers to America to cover the national convention of the CIO. The Frenchman was amazed at what he saw. He sent back a wide-eyed dispatch on the opening day which reported that a Catholic priest had opened the convention with prayer and that many of the delegates, including Philip Murray, CIO president, and other top leaders, had "openly made the sign of the cross." To the French Communists it was hard to believe that men whom they had to respect as effective labor leaders could also be believing Christians and Catholics.

Pope Pius XI once told a visitor that "the great scandal of the nineteenth century was that the Church lost the working class." When we read that the Communist Party controls the major labor federations of Italy and France, we understand what he meant. When we note that the Communists, with 150 delegates, are the largest party in the National Assembly of France, we begin to

see what serious effects that fact has had for a once great Catholic country.

At the same time we take notice, with thanks, that the Church has not lost the working class in America. The record is not perfect, but it is estimated that at least two thirds of those American workers who were baptized as Catholics retain their loyalty to the Faith.

## The Church in America

Unlike its counterpart in Europe, the Church in America has been mainly a Church of the immigrant poor. It has been said that not one of the present American Bishops had a father or mother who was a college graduate. From top to bottom our clergy has come from the ranks of the workers and their sympathies have naturally been, with few exceptions, on the side of their forebears.

There are other reasons why American Catholic workers have been loyal to their Church. We need not go into all of them. One of them, however, was the fact that at

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critical times in the history of the American labor movement there sat in the chair of Peter pontiffs who understood the needs and aspirations of workers in general, and American workers in particular.

Two of these men were Leo XIII (Pope 1878-1903) and Pius XI (Pope 1922-1939). Both of them were the authors of great encyclicals on the labor question. An encyclical, of course, is simply a papal letter addressed to the bishops, and sometimes the faithful, of the whole world. The Latin title of Pius XI's letter, *Quadragesimo Anno*, is taken from the opening words which make reference to the year of its writing, 1931, "the fortieth year" after the publication of *Rerum Novarum*.

Leo XIII, "the old lion," who had the face and aspect of a cherub crossed with an eagle, was already eighty-one when he wrote this encyclical. Four years before, in 1887, he had proven himself a friend to American labor when he refused to take the advice of such men as Archbishop Corrigan of New York who were urging him to condemn the Knights of Labor, the leading labor federation of that day, as the Knights had been condemned in Canada. Instead, the old man listened to Cardinal Gibbons, the Archbishop of Baltimore, who explained to him that the Knights were a secret organization only because they had to be secret to protect their members from employer reprisals, and that their leaders were neither socialist nor subversive.

Leo XIII refused to condemn the

Knights. In 1891 he wrote the encyclical letter which, in a sense, explains why he did not condemn them.

In the opening paragraphs he lays out that so large a portion of mankind should "live undeservedly in miserable and wretched conditions." And he sees himself as called by God to defend "the cause of the workers whom the present age has handed over, each alone and defenseless, to the inhumanity of employers and the unbridled greed of employers."

These of course were the days when little children worked from dawn to dark in mines and factories, when grown men could not make enough from their labor to feed their families, when unions were small and weak, when the rich justified themselves with mealy-mouthed piety like that of George F. Baer, leader of the mine operators in the anthracite coal strike of 1902, when he answered an appeal of one of the strikers as follows:

"The rights and interests of the laboring man will be protected and cared for—not by the labor agitators, but by the Christian men of property to whom God in His infinite wisdom has given control of the property interests of this country . . ."

Leo XIII did not see things that way at all. He proclaimed for all to hear that the right to organize in trade unions is a natural right of man. He reminded employers that they have an obligation to recognize and bargain with these unions, to

pay living wages, to treat their workers as human beings, not as mere commodities like coal or iron.

Against those who insisted that the State should stay out of the conflict and leave employers free to cheat each other *and* the workers, Leo reminded the *laissez-faire* world of his day that "the suffering multitude, without the means to protect itself, relies especially on the protection of the State."

The significance of *Rerum Novarum* is that for the first time the head of the Church spoke out in defense of the labor movement, which up to this time had been, in Europe especially and to a lesser extent in America, captured by Marxists and revolutionaries.

### A Middle Road

At the same time Leo blazed a middle road between socialism and individualism, between the cult of collectivism preached by Marx and the cult of "free enterprise" preached by Adam Smith and a thousand Rotary Club speakers down to our own day. The teaching was radical enough to shock some Catholic papers in America into cutting parts of it out of the versions that they allowed to appear in print.

In the forty years between *Rerum Novarum* and the even greater encyclical of Pius XI, many things happened in America, including the ever more rapid growth of the factory and the assembly line, World War I, the growth and decline of trade unions, the artificial prosperity of the Twenties, and finally the Great Depres-

sion, touched off by the Wall Street Panic of 1929.

Two years later unemployment was well on its way to the peak of 14,000,000 which it reached in 1933. And the Republicans' old promise of "a chicken in every pot and two cars in every garage" had long since boomeranged into a sarcastic refrain for Democratic candidates.

At this point Pius XI, the bespectacled pontiff who concealed beneath his stolid, scholarly appearance a passion for justice that sometimes erupted in jeremiads that terrified his subordinates and recalled the prophets of the Old Law, issued his encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno*, "On the Reconstruction of the Social Order." Much of it is a recapitulation and expansion of the points made by Leo. In the field of unionism Pius defended the right of Catholic workers in such countries as America to join "neutral unions" like the American Federation of Labor, as opposed to the Catholic, or Christian, unions of Europe which were favored by Leo in the face of the violent anti-clericalism of the Marxist labor leaders.

The Pope reminded the faithful, however, that "side by side with these (neutral) unions there should always be associations zealously engaged in imbuing and forming their members in the teaching of religion and morality . . ." Although he defended the wage-contract (where the employer paid the worker "a wage sufficient to support himself and his family"), Pius went beyond Leo in



urging that "so far as is possible, the work-contract be somewhat modified by a partnership contract" so that "workers and other employes thus become sharers in ownership or management or participate in some fashion in the profits received." This idea appealed to Pius XI because he saw in it a means to that objective which he emphasized as the first obligation of "the State and every good citizen," namely, that "the conflict between the hostile classes (of labor and management) be abolished."

With this same end in view he proposed another reform which went beyond the more simple proposals of Leo: namely, the system of Industries and Professions, sometimes called "the occupational-group system" or "the Industry Council Plan." The idea was to permit organized labor and organized management in each industry and profession, under the supervision of the government, to work and plan together to regulate production and distribution in that industry.

Lastly, the Pope reminded us that "there must be a renewal of the Christian spirit . . . lest all our efforts be wasted and our house be builded not on a rock but on shifting sand." He called upon his bishops and priests to "recruit and train from among (workers and employers) themselves auxiliary soldiers of the Church who know them well . . . and can reach their hearts . . . The first and immediate apostles of the workers ought to be workers; the apostles to those who follow

industry ought to be from among themselves."

It is interesting to note that in this long letter of fifty-four pages (NCWC translation) only one page is devoted to an attack on communism. Four pages are given over to a criticism of the more subtle heresies of socialism. But the remainder consists of criticism of the status quo as it existed in 1931 and of a thorough exposition of the reforms necessary to "reconstruct" the status quo in line with Christian principles. This emphasis, in itself, carries a lesson for some of our latter-day prophets, particularly in the halls of Congress.

### Today's Judgment

Twenty-five years later, in 1956, what must be our judgment of the value and effect of Pius XI's great statement? And how much have things changed from the days which he could condemn with the words: "All economic life has become tragically hard, inexorable, and cruel."

In 1931 Monsignor John A. Ryan was almost alone among those American priests who were regarded as experts in the field of labor-management relations and champions of the poor and oppressed. Last summer eighty priests and monsignori came together in Cleveland from all over the country for a social action conference. Perhaps fifty more were unable to make it. They came from labor schools, from chapters of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists, from sections of the Young Christian Workers, from Catholic univer-

sities and colleges which have heeded the words of Pius XI to take their wisdom to the workers and to businessmen and train them in the social teachings of the Church.

Unfortunately, there were not as many laymen at Cleveland as there were priests. But there were more than there would have been in 1931. Starting in 1933 Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin inspired a whole generation of young men and women with their heroic life of service to the poor in the slums of America. The first issue of their paper, *The Catholic Worker*, stated that its purpose was "to popularize and make known the encyclicals of the Popes in regard to social justice."

It was at the Catholic Worker headquarters on Mott Street in New York that a group of trade union men gathered around the kitchen table one Saturday afternoon in February, 1937, and founded the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists. And it was from this movement that there grew the Catholic labor schools and the Catholic labor papers that we have today, and other organizations along the same line.

It is impossible to weigh precisely the influence of such organizations as ACTU. There is no question, however, that they did a great deal to help organize the unorganized, to proclaim the soundness of the trade union principle as stated by the Popes, to train union leaders, to oppose Communist infiltration of the newer unions, to fight racketeer domination in some of the older ones.

It is a comforting thought for Catholics that it was one of their best—the devout and humble Philip Murray—who could supply a leadership strong and sure enough to clean ten Communist unions out of the CIO in 1949. Murray was himself a student of the labor encyclicals and it was from *Quadragesimo Anno* that he and John Brophy conceived the idea for their Industry Council Plan for the joint co-operation of labor and industry, with government, toward the self-regulation of the American economy.

It should also be comforting to Catholics that it is another great Catholic labor leader, George Meany, who has led the fight against racketeering in the old-line AFL unions and today stands as the spokesman of the merged AFL-CIO, representing 15,000,000 workers. (In 1931 there was no CIO and the AFL had fewer than 3,000,000 members.) And it is interesting, if not so comforting, that one of Meany's first jobs as joint spokesman for the American labor movement was to make overtures to the leaders of American industry, so far without success, to pursue together that objective so close to the heart of Pius XI, namely, the abolition of "conflict between the hostile classes."

Today the average worker in an American factory makes about \$78 a week and unemployment is low, except in a few depressed areas. Anyone who has tried to raise a family on \$78 a week knows that that is not Paradise, and the experts tell us that 20 per cent of our families

are living on less than \$40 a week. Elsewhere in the world workers are trying to live on very much less. But still we have come a long way since 1931, and a longer way since 1891.

Our government has recognized its obligation, as Pius pointed out, to pass laws which "undertake the protection of life, health, strength, family, homes, workshops, wages and labor hazards . . . with special concern for women and children."

It must be evident that our world has a long way to go before it is a perfect mirror of the Christian social order set forth in the encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI. American Catholics have done a great deal to

speed that day. Nowhere in the world are workers more loyal to the Church. If there is one place where our work leaves something to be desired, it is, in this writer's opinion, in the field of training and inspiring lay apostles in the field of labor and management.

It will be some time before we in America can point to an army of laymen and women, such as Pius XI envisioned in the closing pages of *Quadragesimo Anno*, who "will go forth as did the Apostles from the Upper Room of Jerusalem, strong in faith, endowed with an invincible steadfastness in persecution, burning with zeal, interested solely in spreading the Kingdom of Christ."



### Equitable Distribution of Goods

With all our strength and effort we must strive that at least in the future the abundant fruits of production will accrue equitably to those who are rich and will be distributed in ample sufficiency among the workers—not that they may become remiss in work, for man is born to labor as the bird to fly—but that they may increase their property by thrift; that they may bear, by wise management of this increase in property, the burdens of family life with greater ease and security, and, emerging from that insecure lot in life in whose uncertainties non-owning workers are cast, they may be able not only to endure the vicissitudes of earthly existence but have also assurance that when their lives are ended they will provide, in some measure, for those they leave after them.—*Quadragesimo Anno*.

# The Church and Social Action\*

MOST REV. ROMOLO CARBONI  
*Apostolic Delegate to Australia*

**T**HE Church's action, in the temporal order, may be designed to secure three distinct ends.

In the first place the Church is committed to the realization of the principles of justice not only as between individuals but as between social classes. Hence, even if we could envisage a situation in which penury had disappeared from the earth but in which there were still great inequalities and injustices as between the social classes, the Church would still be committed in principle to the elimination of injustice simply because the evil of injustice is opposed in essence to the spirit of the Mystical Body of Christ. The present reigning Pontiff has said:

The Church has always been solicitous in the defence and promotion of justice. From the days of the Apostles . . . by the sanctification of souls and the conversion of inner feelings she has also sought the cure of social evils, persuaded as she is that the power of religion and Christian principles bring about this cure better than any other means.<sup>1</sup>

In the second place—and this is a

far more practical question—the Church recognizes that without a certain degree of economic well-being it is normally impossible for the human being to realize his spiritual potentialities. "It is well known," said His Holiness Pope Pius XII, "that the normal growth and increase of religious life presupposes a certain measure of healthy economic and social conditions. Who can resist a pang of emotion upon seeing how economic misery and social evils render Christian life according to the command of God more difficult and too often demanding heroic sacrifices? . . ."<sup>2</sup>

Finally, quite apart from the question that extreme penury often makes the Christian life impossible except by means of heroic sacrifices, there is the fact that the Church recognizes that a certain pattern of society obviously makes the religious instinct more fruitful in men and women while its opposite serves to pervert it. Thus the Church has never ceased to emphasize its predilection for a state of society in which the economic norm is that of

<sup>1</sup> Pope Pius XII, Address to Diocesan Presidents of Italian Catholic Action.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

\*The opening address at Australia's first Christian Social Week, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia, May 1956.

the working proprietor, whether he be the independent family farmer or the artisan controlling his own means of production.

Furthermore, the Church has always upheld the principle of subsidiary function, stating that it is "an injustice, a grave evil, and a disturbance of right order for a larger and higher organization to arrogate to itself functions which can be performed efficiently by smaller and lower bodies."<sup>8</sup> Hence the Church has always favored the decentralization of industry, of economic life and government, of political and social institutions.

### Why Church Intervenes

The Church's advocacy of this particular pattern of social life is not arbitrary. It is based upon her profound knowledge of human nature and her realization that within this framework the natural order of man's life and work, motivated by the divine life of grace, will effectively serve a supernatural end. In this way the supernatural builds on the natural. The one can be considered as an harmonious perfectioning of the other.

These three ends of social action are always present where the Church exercises her social role. I have described them in some detail because I wish to emphasize the fact that the Church does not intervene in the social order gratuitously. It intervenes because it realizes that the social order, under

the heads considered above, has a direct and sometimes overwhelming effect on the spiritual life of men and women. These, then, are the reasons why the Church is committed to action in the field of social structures and social institutions.

### Socio-Moral Factors in the Australian Environment

If this action is to be effective, if it is to be *action* and not simply pious talk, the Church must next face up to the challenge of particular problems which arise in every country in which she exists.

The Bishops of Australia have discharged their responsibility in relation to this matter, as to others, by describing the major factors in the existing social system in Australia which present a challenge to the Church. In their well-known statement, "Catholic Action in Australia," they enumerated the socio-moral "pressures" which offered the greatest problems to this country under the following heads:

- 1) The excessive concentration of population in cities.
- 2) The constant all-absorbing increase of big industries with the resultant growth of class warfare.
- 3) The difficult and precarious state of small industry and agriculture.
- 4) The employment of married women in industry arising often from insufficiency of family wages, with the resultant break-up of the home.
- 5) The deplorable unsuitability of

<sup>8</sup> Pope Pius XI, Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*.

much modern education considered as a preparation for life.

- 6) The insatiable claims of the social service State.

To these factors, which were adverted to in the present Holy Father's famous discourse to the women of Rome on "Women's Duties in Social and Political Life," the Australian Bishops added a reference to the false sense of values inculcated by the great organs of propaganda of our time—the press, the film, the radio.

"These are the urgent and concrete problems of our time," said the Australian Bishops.

### **The Church in the Temporal Order**

It becomes patently clear therefore that if the Church is to play its part in the solution of problems of this type because they are directly connected with the good of souls, the Church is directly involved in the sphere of temporal action. It is abundantly clear that many if not all of these problems cannot be solved, even partially, without an attempt to influence public opinion along the lines of a Christian solution, without the intervention of governments at appropriate moments, without legislation which is the characteristic of governmental action.

It is well that we understand what we mean by the Church when we speak of it in relation to the temporal order.

The Church is composed of apostles and disciples, of hierarchy and laity. The hierarchy has as its objective of action the sanctification of

the faithful, especially through the offering of the Holy Sacrifice and the administration of the Sacraments, the government of the flock of Christ, the propagation of Christian truth to all men. The laity has as its task the insertion of the spirit and principles of Christ into the life, movements, programs, institutions, structures of the temporal order. It of course must share too, by word and example, in the apostolate of making the teaching of Christ known to all men. Many Christians, even some Catholics unfortunately, tend to react against any action of the Church in the sphere of the temporal. They appeal to what some call a "purely spiritual" interpretation of Christianity. Their confusion derives from their failure to perceive that the laity has a definite place and a definite role in the Church.

### **The Problem of Means**

Once it is clearly established that the Church has, through her apostles and disciples acting in their respective spheres for their own proper objectives, the duty—and therefore the right—to attempt to mold social pressures in the community, to make them favorable to Christian living, the problem of means naturally arises. This problem is admittedly one of the most difficult and most delicate that Christians are called upon to solve.

The problem is not made any the easier by the fact that action which is designed conscientiously and realistically to influence social pressures and conditions is very often

social action, economic action and political action. An example of action in the economic field is the establishment of cooperatives. Action in the social field may have an effect on the policies of trade unions or employers' organizations. Action in the political field may seek to influence legislation and regulations at the municipal, State or Federal level. The difficulty concerning means is greatest when political action is involved; yet if we are to be realistic, we must admit that very few of these problems can be solved without involving the action of governments, whether through legislation, administrative action, or, at the international level, diplomatic action. There is hardly one subject which will be considered during the course of this Social Week which, while thoroughly involved in moral principle, does not at some stage require action by government for its solution.

Although difficult, the problem of the action of Christians in the field of the temporal is quite capable of being solved so long as there is clear and rational thinking accompanied by strict adherence to principle.

### Illustration of the Problem

To illustrate the difficulties or the problems facing the Church in social action I may make reference to certain actual concrete issues confronting the Australian nation: for example, let me choose the problems of housing, land settlement, and decentralization. These are issues in

which the Church, in pursuance of its mission, is actively interested.

How does the Church approach such problems?

Obviously three things are needed. Firstly, those who are charged with the responsibility of achieving these objectives must obtain a thorough grounding in the principles involved in each of them. Secondly, these principles must be "broken down" as it were into a whole series of concrete proposals—legal, economic, agricultural, industrial and financial—which are the raw material of legislation to be sought through the normal processes of democratic, parliamentary action. Thirdly, those proposals must be made acceptable to public opinion, so that that opinion will in turn influence governments and administrators. All of these things involve organized effort in a democratic society.

As I said on a previous occasion:

The higher truths and principles and values contained in the social teaching of the Church must take concrete existence adapted to historical circumstances. In the attempt to give temporal realization to the social principles and directives of the Church, doctrinal competence must collaborate with technical skill. In this sphere of practical policies, programs, institutions, organizations, and so on, having the aim of giving concrete expression and actuation to Christian social principles, the apostolic mission of the Church is not ordinarily involved; here Catholics, animated by the spirit of Christ and formed in the social teaching of the Church, must act on their own responsibility and personal

initiative, not formally as mandated by the Church.<sup>4</sup>

### The Action of the Church

How does the Church act in relation to these different functions?

The normal function of the hierarchy is the statement of the principles involved. Certain policies and programs that would aid in the realization of these principles could be suggested in broad outline; as has in fact been done in Social Justice statements published with the authorization and approval of the Catholic hierarchy.

But no one would expect a Bishop to campaign for a certain industrial program, a certain trade union leader.

It is not only the right and privilege of the lay Catholic to undertake these latter tasks; it is also his responsibility and obligation. He must work for and support such policies and such leaders as endeavor to incarnate social principles of Christianity. Of course if there are two alternative programs, two alternative candidates in an election, each in harmony with Christian principles, the Catholic may freely choose in normal circumstances the one for whom he will work and for whom he will cast his vote.

In situations of extreme urgency to the Church or to the nation, however, the Catholic may be morally obliged to support a certain program or candidate; not only in the case when his only alternative

might be an atheistic, totalitarian program or candidate, but also when by the distribution of Catholic votes among a multitude of Christian parties the occasion might be provided for the victory of a minority atheistic totalitarian party.

The task of the hierarchy, and by delegation of the clergy, in the temporal order consists principally in the promulgation of the principles of action, the moral appraisal of different temporal entities, and the spiritual formation of Christian men and women to insert those principles into temporal entities.

In the domain of lay action we may distinguish between the task of the Catholic Action groups properly so called and the task of other organizations of Catholics (or Christians) acting for apostolic motives unto temporal objectives.

### Official Lay Apostolate

Catholic Action is the official lay apostolate. It acts under the immediate authority and direction of the Bishop. Its organizations normally act in two defined ways as far as the subject of social action is concerned. Firstly, in so far as their own members are concerned, they normally confine themselves to training them for action by giving them an integral Christian formation. Secondly, they "educate consciences in the principles of social action, propagate them in public life and thereby create an atmosphere favorable to their moral realization."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Address on Catholic Action, 15th August, 1955.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.



Organizations of Catholics, acting under apostolic motivation for temporal objectives, come under the moral and doctrinal control of the hierarchy, but not under their positive direction.

The task of "breaking down" the principles into a set of concrete proposals and programs, of organizing support for these programs, by public opinion, is normally undertaken by lay organizations, which laymen are indeed encouraged to form precisely to carry on this work—but normally on the responsibility of the laymen themselves and not involving the responsibility of the hierarchy.

An ever-increasing responsibility is being placed at the present moment on those voluntary organizations of laymen described above to which is normally entrusted the responsibility for action in the field of the social apostolate. Such an organization is The Catholic Social Movement, which has existed in Australia for the last ten years and which in addition to its general responsibility for the training of its members to fulfil their normal civic duties, has done much in the fight against Communism in the industrial field.

In such bodies, the task of the laity is to formulate the detailed practical programs founded on Christian principles which are necessary if these principles are to take flesh in modern society. It is also

the task of the laity in such an organization to utilize all the aids which a democratic society provides in winning acceptance for those proposals by public opinion, by the press and by parliaments. In performing both of these functions the laity do not purport to commit the church officially to their proposals or to their activities.

### Lay Responsibilities

Equally the hierarchy will not deny to lay organizations of this type the liberty to act on their own responsibility. As I have pointed out on a previous occasion, "for any form of Lay Apostolate, and especially for their action in the temporal order, in the rural, industrial, economic, social and political spheres, the lay people must be allowed to exercise their proper responsibility, initiative and leadership. No movement whatsoever is or can be called lay apostolate if the laity have not responsibility, leadership and initiative."<sup>6</sup>

To these extraordinary opportunities for leadership present for the laity there is added a complementary duty, "the primary duty," according to Pope Pius XII, "to act with a view to bringing about the return of modern society in its organizations to the sources made sacred by the Word of God made flesh."<sup>7</sup>

It may be well to mention the nature of the role of the chaplain

<sup>6</sup> Address delivered on centenary of establishment of St. Mary's Parish, North Sydney, 22nd April, 1956.

<sup>7</sup> Pope Pius XII, Christmas Allocution, 1955.

in these organizations of Catholics geared to temporal objectives. The chaplain is the nominee or delegate of the Bishop in the sphere of the spiritual formation of the members of the organizations. It is wrong to look upon him as the head or director of activities ordered to temporal objectives. It is obvious that the quality of the decisions made by the laymen will be determined by the degree of spiritual development which they have reached, by the degree to which they have been led to "think with the Church" in their approach to all of the problems of the modern world. It is only if they have been led to see that their action in the temporal field is not the action of a politician, an economist, or an agricultural expert, but that of an apostle using each of these disciplines, that they can be relied upon properly to exercise the great powers entrusted to them. Above all, it is only if they see their social apostolate as a mighty manifestation of the charity of Christ—the very kernel of their Faith—that they will accomplish the Christian transformation of the social order to which they aspire.

There is the noble vocation of the clergy as far as lay movements are concerned—to form the consciences, to mould the spirits, and to elevate the souls of their members. None but the chaplains can perform this task on which depends entirely the success of the social apostolate. Without themselves occupying those positions of leadership which belong by right to the laity, the chaplains

can determine the character and the caliber of that leadership by the spiritual formation which they impart.

It is in this general way that the Church operates to build the Christian influence in society. It is desirable that these principles of action should be known to all, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, so that men of good will may appreciate the purposes which Catholics seek to fulfil in carrying on their apostolate in civil society and so that the malicious will be unable to use ignorance as a weapon with which to stir up rancour and hatreds.

A free democratic society can only be the stronger as a result of this type of action on the part of the Christians. The constant leavening of public life and opinion with Christian principles and programs must of its very essence free the political leaders of the community from their present subjection to pressure groups of sectional economic interests which make statesmanship almost impossible of achievement. Furthermore, this type of action will bring about the constant gravitation into public life of men, possessed in the words of the present Pontiff, "of high moral character and steadfast resolution who consider themselves as representatives of the whole people and not merely as spokesmen of a certain number, to whose particular interests the true requirements of the common good are only too frequently sacrificed."<sup>\*</sup>

And as His Holiness also pointed

<sup>\*</sup> Pope Pius XII, Christmas Allocution, 1944.

out, "for any people living under a democratic regime the question of the high moral tone, the practical ability, and the intellectual capacity

of its members of parliament is a matter of life or death, of prosperity or depression, of resurgence or perpetual decline . . ."

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<sup>a</sup> Ibid.



## Justice and Charity

Admittedly, no vicarious charity can substitute for justice which is due as an obligation and is wrongfully denied. Yet even supposing that everyone should finally receive all that is due him, the widest field for charity will always remain open. For justice alone can, if faithfully observed, remove the causes of social conflict but can never bring about union of minds and hearts. Indeed, all the institutions for the establishment of peace and the promotion of mutual help among men, however perfect these may seem, have the principal foundation of their stability in the mutual bond of minds and hearts whereby the members are united with one another. If this bond is lacking, the best of regulations come to naught.—*Quadragesimo Anno*.



## A New Branch of Law

A new branch of law, wholly unknown to the earlier time, has arisen from the continuous and unwearied labor to protect vigorously the sacred rights of the workers that flow from their dignity as men and as Christians. These laws undertake the protection of life, health, strength, family, homes, workshops, wages and labor hazards, in fine, everything which pertains to the condition of wage workers, with special concern for women and children.—*Quadragesimo Anno*.

## **The Businessman in Society\***

POPE PIUS XII

**T**EN years ago, on February 16, 1946, your Italian General Confederation of Commerce was established by uniting the Commerce Associations which, after the war ended, had been formed in central-southern Italy and in the northern regions.

To celebrate the tenth anniversary of this important event in a fitting manner you decided to hold a national convention in Rome of the directors of the official organizations in every category of business from all the provinces. The large number of delegates assembled here, whom We have the pleasure of seeing before Us today, demonstrates clearly the enthusiasm aroused by your decision to meet in Rome. We feel certain that the exchange of views, in which you are taking part during these days, will inspire you to new motives to continue that friendly collaboration which has permitted you to pursue and bring to a successful termination so many aims and purposes that are useful to each one of you individually and to the profession of commerce in general.

The extent of the work accomplished by your Confederation is evidenced by documents which were kindly sent to Us, namely, the series of reports on the activity of your Confederation and the minutes of the different congresses and conventions held in the last ten years. They are eloquent proof of the important place held by your activity in the life of the nation.

### **Function of a Businessman**

Nevertheless, often today the function of a businessman is not properly appreciated. His usefulness is doubted and an attempt is made to dispense with his services. There is suspicion that he may wish to make exaggerated profits out of his economic operation. You should have, of course, the greatest interest to find out whether such opinions are or are not well founded; whether perhaps here and there commerce use-

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\*An Address delivered to a group of Italian wholesalers and retailers, members of the Italian Confederation of Commerce, February 17, 1956.

lessly prolongs and complicates the passage of goods from producer to consumer.

However this may be, now, as in all periods of history, a businessman exercises a specific function. He would be wrongly classified if we saw in him merely a mediator between producer and consumer. He is that, undoubtedly, and to that end he possesses priceless experience acquired not without difficulty and risks.

However, he is principally an inspirer in the economy, not only capable of assuring a proper distribution of merchandise, but furthermore of effectively inciting a producer to supply objects of better quality and at lower price, and of making possible for consumers access to the market in the largest measure.

Each exchange of products, in fact, not only satisfies determined needs or desires but makes possible the use of new methods, creates latent and sometimes unexpected energies, and stimulates the spirit of enterprise and of invention. This instinct, innate in man, to create, to improve and to progress, explains commercial activity as much, even more, than does the simple desire for gain.

A businessman needs a careful and well-planned professional training. He needs a mind always alert to understand and follow economic trends, in order to transact business with success, to foresee people's reactions as well as their psychology, both of which at times have such great bearing upon the play of exchange.

Strong moral qualities are no less indispensable: courage in times of crisis, perseverance in overcoming apathy and lack of understanding, willingness to try new formulae and methods of operation, to grasp and make the utmost use of all opportunities for good success. You thus deserve the esteem and consideration of everyone by putting these qualities at the service of the national community.

### **Danger of Regimentation**

To operate successfully, a businessman needs to find an open field where too complicated or restrictive regulations shall not halt his progress. He hopes to face an honorable competition, operating under the same conditions as those in which he finds himself and one that shall not have unjustifiable privileges. At the same time he ventures to hope that too numerous and heavy taxes will not deprive him of an excessive part of the gains deserved.

Undoubtedly, now more than in the past, there exists a desire to as-

sure to all social classes such guarantees as shall spare them from undue economic hardships and from situations related to the fluctuations of the economy—guarantees that shall protect employment and salaries, that shall provide for sickness and disability which could reduce a worker to inaction and deprive him of the means of support. These are well justified solicitudes. In many cases the social-security system has not yet succeeded in ending painful economic conditions and in healing wounds which still remain open.

It is important, however, that the anxious desire for security on the part of the worker should not discourage the businessman's readiness to risk his resources so as to dry up his every creative impulse; nor impose on enterprise operating conditions that are too burdensome; nor discourage those who devote their time and energy to commercial transactions. Unhappily, it is an all-too-human tendency to choose the line of least resistance, avoid obligations and exempt oneself from the duty of self-reliance in order to fall back on the support of society and to live at the expense of one's fellows. These are the easy solutions in which the responsibility of the individual is reduced to a minimum in the shadow of the nameless multitude.

If the businessman has his own interests to defend and promote; if he bears the responsibility for his own actions, he will deal with and solve these economic problems with greater zeal, greater ability and greater prudence. No one will deny the need for assurances, for a vigilance exercised by the public authorities to the advantage of businessmen themselves, as well as the good of the people. Let us hope, however, that the State will remain within the limits of its function, which is that of complementing private enterprise, overseeing it and, if necessary, aiding it. Government should not substitute itself for private enterprise when the latter acts successfully and usefully. Between the two components of the economic movement, the forces of progress and the elements of organization, a balance must be maintained if we wish to avoid falling into anarchy or stagnation.

Since it is your business to represent in the national economy the moving impulse that stimulates and facilitates exchange, you may claim with every right the liberty necessary to fulfill your function genuinely and effectively. It should be your intention to make use of the freedom of action not only to serve your own private interests or those of a definite class of society but to promote the advantage of the whole country.

### Professional Integrity

The businessman, in fact, is expected to possess an acknowledged professional conscience and integrity. Hand in hand with the weaknesses of human nature, temptations are not lacking to make use of procedures that are not too honest, to make illicit profits, to sacrifice moral dignity for material gains. This temptation is dangerous in a period in which the technical progress and the expansion of economy tend to strengthen the desire to increase to the utmost the quantity and variety of material possessions. This desire cannot be condemned as long as it remains balanced by an even stronger desire for spiritual progress, and by the will to promote in individuals as well as in social groups a true selflessness, and the solicitude to relieve the sufferings and wants of others.

Every man must be convinced that his destiny is not limited to procuring the most comfortable situation in this temporal life. One who is content with this ideal will be unable to find in himself sufficient energy to resist the ignoble impulses arising from his lower nature, from the example and inducements of those in whose midst he spends his life, and also, unfortunately, from the need of defending himself from similar conduct on the part of others.

Freedom of economic activity cannot be justified and endure save on the condition that it serve a higher liberty and be ready, if necessary, to renounce a part of itself in order not to fail superior moral demands. Otherwise it will be difficult to halt the progressive trend towards a type of society whose economic and political organization is itself the negation of every freedom.

We hope that each of the members of your associations may pride himself on exercising his profession not only for profit, but with the conscious feeling of fulfilling a function necessary and highly useful for the good of everyone. You have pointed out the difficult conditions which face you today, the obstacles which oppose the successful outcome of your undertakings, and the burdens which weigh heavily upon you. We well understand the reasons for such complaints. Nevertheless, We urge you, in the defense and protection of your interests to use a reasonable moderation which takes account of the general economic situation, and of the numerous and delicate factors which enter into the regulation of the social structure.

With the desire to put proper reforms into practice, you must show

a constructive spirit, desirous of respecting all aspects of an economic and social reality which is very complex, without forgetting that which is essential—that is to say, the permanent and essential values of the spiritual order which avoid all private aims and remain the only ones capable of assuring the salvation of modern civilization.

In moments of discouragement, and even more in moments of the highest success, do not lose sight of these considerations which—We like to hope—may always aid you to solve, happily and soundly, harassing problems both in the economic field and in the field of human relations. With such a wish and in the hope of more abundant divine favors, which We invoke upon you, your families and all members of your confederation, We impart to you with all Our heart, Our Apostolic Blessing.



### Twin Rocks of Shipwreck

Twin rocks of shipwreck must be carefully avoided. For, as one is wrecked upon, or comes close to, what is known as “individualism” by denying or minimizing the social and public character of the right of property, so by rejecting or minimizing the private and individual character of this same right, one inevitably runs into “collectivism” or at least closely approaches its tenets.—*Quadragesimo Anno*.



### Superfluous Income

A person's superfluous income, that is, income which he does not need to sustain life fittingly and with dignity, is not left wholly to his own free determination.—*Quadragesimo Anno*.



# Labor Day Statement\*

N.C.W.C.

A DECADE has elapsed since the NCWC Social Action Department issued its first annual Labor Day Statement. In spite of occasional setbacks, some of which were needlessly caused by restrictive legislation, it was a decade of progress rather than decline in the field of labor-management relations. Whether the trend during the next decade will be for better or for worse remains to be seen. Recent strikes to the contrary notwithstanding, there is reason, in our opinion, to be fairly optimistic. Barring unforeseen developments, the odds would seem to be in favor of continuing progress. As a matter of fact, in the judgment of many experts, we are about to enter upon an entirely new era which will be characterized by an unprecedented degree of industrial peace and labor-management cooperation. Within recent weeks one of these experts has even dared to prophesy that by 1957 the majority of today's most troublesome issues in collective bargaining will have been largely resolved. We are inclined to agree with this conclusion.

Be that as it may, the recent merger of the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations is one of several indications that we have reached an important turning point in the history of industrial relations in the United States. The amalgamation of these two organizations into a single federation will not have, nor was it intended to have, any direct effect on the conduct of industrial relations in separate companies or industries. The combined federation has no authority to determine policy for its member organizations in the field of collective bargaining. It is essentially, as its name implies and its constitution clearly states, a voluntary federation of semi-independent or autonomous unions which retain the right to make their own decisions in the field of economic policy. In other words, collective bargaining will be conducted in the future, as it has been in the past, not by the federation itself but by the individual unions which comprise its membership.

From that point of view, therefore, the recent merger of the AFL and CIO is of only minor importance. From the larger point of view, how-

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\*Statement issued by the Social Action Department, National Catholic Welfare Conference, August 30, 1956.

ever, the merger can properly be regarded as the symbol of a new era in the field of industrial relations. It symbolizes the fact that organized labor in the United States has come of age and, at long last, is in a position to concentrate on its essential role in the economic life of the nation, which is to cooperate with management, as an equal partner, in applying the principles of social justice. In the past, organized labor of necessity has been forced to spend a disproportionate amount of time and energy defending the right of workers to organize and bargain collectively. While the organization of workers has not yet been completed and probably will not be completed for another generation, nevertheless the right to organize and bargain collectively is now so firmly established that it can never again be seriously challenged on a general scale, except, of course, at the prohibitive cost of disrupting national unity and paralyzing the national economy.

There would seem to be little if any fear of such a catastrophe, for, happily, the majority of the really influential leaders of American industry have amply demonstrated their willingness to forget the past and to develop, in cooperation with organized labor, a new and more constructive pattern of industrial relations. All due credit should be given to these far-sighted employers and to their counterparts in the labor movement for their economic statesmanship. Moreover, recent manifestations of continuing friction between labor and management in the field of politics as well as in the field of collective bargaining should not be exaggerated, nor should they be permitted to obscure the fact that in general we are moving in the right direction.

There will, of course, be many differences of opinion between labor and management in the future as there have been in the past. That is to be expected. Nevertheless, as we have already indicated, there is reason to believe—and it would seem to be the consensus of industrial relations experts—that we are entering upon a new era in which labor and management, by and large, will find it possible to cooperate more harmoniously than ever before, not only for their mutual advantage but for the good of the nation as a whole.

If this be so, the approach to labor-management relations in the years immediately ahead can be and ought to be more positive and constructive than it has been in the past. To be sure, it is still necessary to defend the right of labor to organize and bargain collectively. It is also necessary to oppose restrictive legislation which would hamper the exercise of this right and to support constructive legislation in the field of

labor-management relations as well as in the field of labor standards and social welfare. It is even more important, however, to emphasize the fact that the major problems confronting labor and management at the present time—automation, for example, or the spotty but potentially dangerous problem of mass unemployment in some of our key industries—cannot be solved by collective bargaining alone or by legislation alone, but only by the broadest possible cooperation between labor and management at the industry-wide as well as the national level. To put it another way, both labor and management must be encouraged to get off the defensive and to think more and more in terms of their joint responsibility for the welfare of the whole economy. Their present influence for good or for evil can hardly be exaggerated. They can make or break the economic future of the United States, depending upon whether or not they live up to the enormous responsibilities which their extraordinary power has imposed upon them.

Only a few of these responsibilities need be mentioned here.

From the negative point of view, the labor movement's most immediate and most pressing responsibility is to eliminate from its ranks as rapidly as possible the cancer of racketeering. Fortunately the number of racketeers in the labor movement is relatively small, but obviously even one is one too many. It is to be hoped, therefore, that every local union in the United States, following the leadership of the Ethical Practices Committee of the AFL-CIO—which has taken a vigorous stand against corruption and dishonesty within the ranks of labor—will examine its own conscience and its own financial books and, if it finds any irregularities therein, ruthlessly eliminate them as soon as possible. Time is of the essence, for the hard-won reputation of the American labor movement is at stake right now.

Parenthetically it may also be said that the time has come for responsible labor leaders to caution the rank-and-file members of the trade union movement to give a fair day's work for a fair day's pay and to warn them not to abuse the well deserved benefits which the unions have been able to negotiate with their employers in recent years. The organized labor movement has reached maturity, and the average union member should readily accept reasonable and constructive advice from his leaders about the necessity of increased efficiency and the importance of respecting the rights of employers and consumers.

Employers, for their part, have the responsibility of policing their own organizations and of bringing moral pressure to bear upon those of their

associates who may be guilty of harassing the labor movement or of impeding necessary progress in the field of labor-management relations or in the field of legislation. In this connection, employers are reminded of the heavy charge which was imposed upon them by Pope Pius XII in his recent address to the International Conference on Human Relations in Industry. "Specifically," His Holiness said, "one expects to find in the employer an intense desire for true social progress. Many people show no lack of good will, but it must be observed at times that an overwhelming attachment to economic advantages tends more or less to blind men to a perception of the want of equity and justice in certain living conditions. Your Christian instincts will urge you to overcome this obstacle and to exercise your authority in a manner conformable to the ideals set forth in the Gospel."

The sheer size of modern corporations and modern unions creates a number of additional problems and imposes upon labor and management a number of additional responsibilities. This problem was recently posed by a distinguished public servant in a series of pointed questions which we recommend to the prayerful study of all our fellow citizens!

Will the worker who performs the same task, day after day, as part of a gigantic organization, often controlled by people he never knows or sees, be able to maintain his strength as an individual with all that that implies in terms of principles, convictions, hopes and ambitions?

Will our people, if conditioned to regimentation both in the factory and at home through mass media of canned communication, become uncritical victims of any propagandist who happens to gain control of the airways?

Will managers consider a worker's personality as a matter for their concern as well as his material welfare and company profit?

Will organizations of workers continue to protect the individual worker in his dignity and pride from becoming only part of a mass, about whom negotiations are made at contract time?

Will the future conduct of our economy be illuminated by justice and individual dignity, so that each man finds full satisfaction in his daily task? Will the American worker preserve his identity as an individual of dignity? Or will we allow technology to change our country so that we lose sight of every goal except those which are material?

It would be easy to list a number of other problems which call for separate action on the part of labor and management. In the final analysis, however, their biggest problem, their principal responsibility is one which they share in common—namely, to promote the general welfare by the wise and unselfish exercise of their enormous economic power. They will not be able to fulfill this or any of their other responsibilities

unless they acknowledge as creatures their dependence upon Almighty God and the need to appeal humbly to Him in prayer. In conclusion, therefore, it is recommended that they pray every day of their lives as Solomon prayed at the altar of Gabaon. When the Lord appeared to the king in a dream and told him to choose whatever gift he wanted, Solomon answered:

Lord, God, Thou hast bidden this servant of Thine reign where his father reigned; but, Lord, what am I? No better than a little child that has no skill to find its way back and forth. And here am I, Thy servant, lost among the thousands of the people Thou hast chosen, a people whose numbers are beyond all count and reckoning. Be this, then, Thy gift to Thy servant, a heart quick to learn, so that I may be able to judge Thy people's disputes and discern between good and ill. How else should a man sit in judgment over such a people as this, great as Thy people is great?

Solomon was a king, but we humbly recognize that his power and his influence were no greater than that which God has entrusted to the leaders of labor and management in the modern world. They are called upon under our form of government and in conjunction with government to sit in judgment every day over the economic destiny of the nation. May they humbly acknowledge, in the spirit of Solomon, that they, too, are "no better than a little child, that has no skill to find his way back and forth," that they, too, have need, above everything else, of "a heart quick to learn so that they may be able to judge their people's disputes." If they ask for this gift with the humility of a Solomon, they can confidently hope to receive the same reply. They can expect the Lord to say to them as He did to Solomon: "For this request of thine . . . thou shalt be rewarded. Thou didst not ask for a long life, or riches, or vengeance upon thy enemies, but for wisdom to administer justice. Thy prayer is granted; hereby I grant thee a heart full of wisdom and discernment, beyond all that went before thee or shall come after thee."

May this priceless favor, "the wisdom to administer justice," be granted abundantly to all those who are charged with the heavy responsibility of establishing social justice in the industrial life of our beloved country.

# Problems of Automation\*

MSGR. ANGELO DELL'ACQUA  
*Vatican Substitute Secretary of State*

**I**N ACCORD with the best traditions of the Social Weeks of France, its 43rd session soon to open in Marseilles will consider, under the title of "Human Needs in Relation to Economic Expansion," a question whose wide ramifications clearly show its timeliness and importance.

This is indeed a happy choice of subject. It proves once again that your ever-young organization is not afraid to present clearly for public consideration economic and social problems whose solutions determine to a large extent the future of your country.

The Sovereign Pontiff has noted with interest the broad and precise program of the Week, about which you consulted with him several months ago. He knows to what a distinguished audience your lecturers will speak and how useful such meetings are for the dissemination of their teachings. He has given me the responsibility of expressing to you his paternal wishes for the success of this session.

How many times since Leo XIII have the Popes not reminded the contemporary world, feverishly concerned with technical progress, of what man requires from the economy. Recently the Holy Father cited the familiar phrase of his predecessor about labor, which is "destined for the material and moral improvement of man," but which too often in modern industrial life tends "to become the instrument of corruption."

He also added these words: "We should like to be able to say that this does not happen any more anywhere in the world. Unfortunately, everyone knows that progress is slow, much too slow, on this essential point in most countries and on whole continents" (Address to delegates to the International Conference on Human Relations in Industry, April 2, 1956).

The recommendations of papal teaching have most assuredly always found a faithful echo in the Social Weeks of France. Moreover, fortified with the experience of the last century, the sons of the Church must still turn to the fundamental principles of Catholic social doctrine for the

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\*A letter written in the name of His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, to the 43rd session of the *Semaines Sociales de France*, July 17-22, 1956.

enlightenment necessary to correct their judgments and actions at a time when the world is already priming itself for a second industrial revolution.

In our day, in fact, the power of technology—whose irreversible progress it would be utopian to wish to check—combines with population growth and the aspirations of peoples for a better life to lead nations along the path of economic expansion, with all the efforts of investment, equipment, reorganization and land regulation that it involves.

Undoubtedly this situation should be considered with prudence and healthy optimism. Is not growth the normal sign of the economic health of a nation? Would it be reasonable or even Christian to shackle the future by holding it back? The Church, on the contrary, asks the faithful to see in the astounding progress of science the realization of the plan of God, who has entrusted to man the discovery and exploitation of the wealth of the universe: "Fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen. 1; 28).

If the machine, which only yesterday was still a gradually improving and stronger tool in the service of man, can henceforth replace the hand which grasps and guides, the eye which observes and controls and even, for certain definite purposes, the consciousness which watches and the memory which preserves an always available past—if the machine is substituted not only for the worker himself, but also for the bookkeeper and to a certain extent for the technician, thus opening to industry unsuspected possibilities—for all this we should only give thanks to God who has enabled man to accomplish such works.

Is it necessary, nevertheless, to abandon oneself with blind confidence to these perspectives of technical progress and economic expansion? "Productivity is not an end in itself," the Holy Father said recently (Address of April 2, 1956). It no longer finds within itself the principle of its own regulation.

One would strive in vain [to remove the widespread feeling of economic insecurity] by holding out the possibilities of technology and organization which emphasize the promises of ever-increasing production at less cost, the forecast of a constantly rising standard of living and the quantity of material needs which men can still increase throughout the world. It would be useless, as We have said, because the more exclusively and more constantly one increases the tendency to consume, so much more does the economy cease to have as its object the real and normal man, the man who subordinates and measures the demands of earthly life according to his final end and to the laws of God (Address of May 14, 1953; *Acta Ap. Sed.*, vol. 45, p. 406).

This warning by His Holiness is a timely reminder of that higher standard to which economic expansion must conform in order to fulfill its proper end, which is "to put in a stable manner within the reach of all members of society the material conditions required for the development of their cultural and spiritual life" (Address of March 7, 1948; *Discourses and Radio Messages*, vol. 10, p. 12).

It is up to Christians to remind the world of these truths. Christians know the greatness of man in the eyes of God and understand that his condition would remain weak and precarious if the world should increase his power without changing his soul. One can already observe, with regard to material goods, that higher production is sometimes sought more for anticipated increases in profits than for the purpose of raising the general standard of living.

Now if, in this regard, it is necessary to see to it that the working classes are responsible for and reap the benefits of economic development, how much more reason is there to be careful to direct the growing capacity for production toward the participation of the greatest number in the cultural wealth and the spiritual and moral riches of humanity.

These perspectives are of great importance at a time when, in certain countries, the machine is reducing working hours. While rest after work is healthy and leisure can favor spiritual life and human relations, unemployment, on the contrary, is the ferment of social disintegration. One must not permit economic expansion to lead man beyond the just and lawful limits of his existence. Production that is disordered in regard to its goals does not serve man. It does not respect him.

But to these future problems there correspond other preoccupations, more pressing if not more serious, on the level of present-day productive capacity.

How can one lose sight of the fact that a policy of economic expansion requires considerable investments, whose potentialities and risks one must know how to evaluate? Economic expansion requires not only a constant advance in scientific research, but also the training of scholars and engineers to apply these advances to a country's economic expansion. It also involves the lives of workers and their families. The necessary reconversion of industry as well as the indispensable developments in agriculture and commerce must not take place at their expense. A totalitarian economy can assure the future by disregarding the present generation. A Christian, although he can ask for sacrifices, does not have the right to sacrifice his brother.



Recent instances show that the risk of mass unemployment as a result of the sudden modernization of factories is not illusory. In the face of this danger Catholic doctrine reminds us that the economic progress of a country can be fully realized only by free collaboration of wills, for "with regard to the goal of social economy every productive member is the subject, not the object, of economic life" (*Discourses and Radio Messages*, vol. 10, p. 13).

Nevertheless, a judicious participation of workers in the effort of expansion can bring about a progressive and profound transformation of the present condition of the working class.

Many other human aspects are to be considered here, which a Catholic economist will not misunderstand and which will be brought up during the Social Week. In conclusion we shall cite two of them.

There is first the displacement of manual labor, which often appears as an inevitable consequence of the logical development of a nation's economic resources. Let it suffice for us to draw the attention of those responsible for the social, religious and family consequences of this uprooting, by which thousands of men find themselves adversely affected. Here again, out of respect for the person of the least of our brothers, has everything possible been done to remedy these problems?

Secondly, your program rightly calls attention to the new future that is being opened to professional education by the requirements of economic expansion. The necessity for more highly developed technical training and for a more precise orientation that will make young people more capable of following the constant advance of science and of applying it to the economy have already been discussed. Here too serious human and religious needs must be safeguarded. It is not without reason that the future of the young brought up in a "technical spirit" is the concern of those who have at heart the moral health of the society of tomorrow.

The Holy Father likes to think that the Social Week's work will contribute effectively to spreading the moral standards arising from justice and social charity, which must control all economic progress so that it may be used to society's advantage and not to its detriment. (Cfr. *Quadragesimo Anno*, A.A.S., vol. 23, p. 206.)

As defenders of the worth of the individual, Christians will keep in mind the higher goals of the economy and the human conditions of its development. Solicitous for the general welfare of the nation, they will fight against outmoded customs, special interests and selfish resistance.

But they will be equally opposed to blind expansion inspired solely by the profit motive.

Aware, finally, of the dangers that any kind of materialism brings to the contemporary world and formed by a just conception of life and labor, they will welcome economic progress favorably and cooperate with it willingly, without ever forgetting that "technology is always for man and for the totality of spiritual and material values which concern his nature and his personal dignity" (Christmas Radio Message, 1953, A.A.S. vol. 46, p. 11).

Asking many divine graces for the 43rd Social Week, which will find in Marseilles a fitting place for its work, the Sovereign Pontiff grants you, as well as to all the members of the Hierarchy, speakers and those who attend the Social Week, his apostolic blessing.



## Dignity of Labor

Labor is not a mere commodity. On the contrary the worker's human dignity in it must be recognized. It, therefore, cannot be bought and sold like a commodity.—*Quadragesimo Anno*.

### THE CATHOLIC MIND

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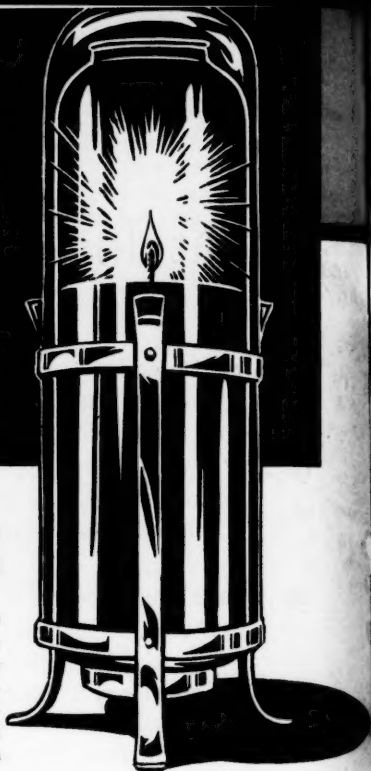
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